

C. H. Spurgeon's Expositions  
Volume 3



**C. H. Spurgeon's**  
**Expositions**  
Volume 3

**C. H. Spurgeon**

Containing his readings from  
*John - Revelation*

WITH INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS ON SPURGEON'S  
PREACHING AND EXPOSITIONS  
BY  
PRESIDENT JAMES A. GARFIELD

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# FOREWORD

Perhaps the most widely read and often quoted preacher in history is Charles Haddon Spurgeon. His published sermons, totaling 63 volumes, demonstrate his remarkable gifts, his understanding of the Scriptures, his theological acumen, his mastery of the English language, his ability to illustrate the profound truths of the gospel with simplicity, and his tremendous intellect.

Spurgeon preached *Christ* passionately. Without question, he was, and through his written works continues to be used of God for the furtherance of the gospel around the world in a remarkable way. Spurgeon's deep, yet simple trust and understanding of his Lord and Savior, his great mercy, grace and love is evident in his writings. His great longing to have others come to know, trust, love and to worship the Lord Jesus Christ is also evident. To that end he labored tirelessly in publishing the gospel.

Unfortunately there is an aspect of Spurgeon's preaching and writing that is hardly known. Before preaching to thousands at the Metropolitan Tabernacle each Sunday, he gave a brief exposition of a lengthy passage of Scripture before his sermon. Many of these expositions were published at the end of his weekly sermons in *The Sword and The Trowel*. However, they have never before been published as a work to themselves. Three volumes are here published under the title *Spurgeon's Expositions* containing a complete compilation of those expositions. While not every scripture of the Bible was covered in his transcribed expositions, this mammoth project has resulted in a 'virtual' concise Bible commentary.

At first glance, expositions of the same passage may appear repetitive, but you will find repeated expositions of the same passages to contain fresh comments each time that he read them. It is the most valuable Bible reference material made available to pastors in a generation, and its value as a family devotional is beyond measure. It is our prayer that these expositions will be blessed of God to the good of many for the glory of Christ.

**PSALM 90:17.** *And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.*

“Let not what we do for thee fall to the ground like a badly-built wall! Let not our work be consumed in the great testing fire, ‘but the work of our hands establish thou it!’” (Taken from a Spurgeon exposition)

# INTRODUCTION

The following observations were written by General James A. Garfield, later to become President of the United States, after visiting The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit and hearing a Spurgeon exposition and sermon from Job. It is a fitting introduction to these volumes of *Spurgeon's Expositions*.

“I did not intend to listen to Spurgeon as to some *lusus naturae* (freak of nature), but to try to discover what manner of man he was, and what was the secret of his power . . . At half-past eleven Spurgeon came in, and at once offered a short, simple earnest prayer, and read and helped the whole congregation to sing Watts' stirring hymn:

*There is a land of pure delight.*

“For the first time in my life I felt some sympathy with the doctrine that would reject instrumental music from church worship. There must have been five thousand voices joining in the hymn. The whole building was filled and overflowed with the strong volume of song. The music made itself felt as a living, throbbing presence, that entered your nerves, brain, heart, and filled and swept you away in its resistless current.

“After the singing, he read a chapter of Job, and then a contrasted passage from Paul, both relating to life and death. He accompanied his reading with familiar and sensible, sometimes expositional, comments; then followed another hymn, a longer prayer, a short hymn, and then the sermon from a text in the chapter he had read in Job 14:14, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." He evidently proceeded upon the assumption that the Bible, all the Bible, in its very words, phrases, and sentences, is the word of God; and that a microscopic examination of it will reveal ever-opening beauties and blessings. All the while, he impresses you with that, and also with the living fullness and abundance of his faith in the presence of God and the

personal accountability of all to him. An unusual fullness of belief in these respects seems to me to lie at the foundation of his power. Intellectually he is marked by his ability to hold with great tenacity, and pursue with great persistency any line of thought he chooses. He makes the most careful and painstaking study of the subject in hand. No doubt fully as much of his success depends upon his labor, as upon his force of intellect. He has chosen the doctrines and the literature of the Bible as his field, and does not allow himself to be drawn aside. He rarely wanders into the fields of poesy (poetry), except to find the stirring hymns which may serve to illustrate his theme. He uses Bible texts and incidents with great readiness and appropriateness, and directs all his power, not toward his sermon, but toward his hearers. His arrangement is clear, logical, and perfectly comprehensible; and at the end of each main division of the sermon, he makes a personal application of the truth developed, to his hearers, and asks God to bless it. His manner is exceedingly simple and unaffected. He does not appear to be aware that he is doing a great thing, and I could see no indication that his success has turned his head.

“He has the word-painting power quite at his command, but uses it sparingly. I could see those nervous motions of the hands and feet which all forcible speakers make when preparing to speak; and also in the speaking, the sympathy between his body and his thoughts which controlled his gestures, and produced those little touches of theatrical power, which are so effective in a speaker. . .

“Every good man ought to be thankful for the work Spurgeon is doing. I could not but contrast this worship with that I saw a few days ago at Westminster Abbey. In that proud old mausoleum of kings, venerable with years and royal price, the great organ rolled out its deep tones, and sobbed and thundered its grand music, mingled with the intoning of the hired singers. Before the assembly of rich and titled worshipers, sat a choir of twenty persons. The choir boys in their white robes had just been fighting among the tombs and monuments of the nave just before the service began. However devout and effective their worship may be, it is very costly, and must be confined, to a great extent, to the higher classes. I felt that Spurgeon had opened an asylum where the great untitled, the poor and destitute of this great city, could come and find their

sorrows met with sympathy; their lowliness and longings for a better life touched by a large heart and an undoubted faith. God bless Spurgeon! He is helping to work out the problem of religious and civil liberty for England, in a way he knows not of.”

James A. Garfield  
General of the Union Army  
20<sup>th</sup> President of the United States



# JOHN

## JOHN 1:1-34

1. *In the beginning was the Word, —*

Christ the Word has existed from all eternity. He is the eternal Son of the eternal Father; he is really what Melchisedec was metaphorically, “having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.” “In the beginning was the Word,” —

1. *And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

The Word was as truly God as the Father was God, and as the Spirit was God:” these three are one,” and ever have been one. “Very God of very God” is that Jesus whom we trust, and love, and adore.

2-5. *The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

The light of Christ shone many times amid the darkness that enshrouded the world before his coming to live here in the flesh, yet comparatively few recognized that light, and rejoiced in it. Christ’s light shines more brightly now, but the dark, benighted soul of man perceives not the brightness of our spiritual Lord until the Holy Spirit works the mighty miracle of regeneration, and so gives sight to those who have been blind.

6. *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

What a descent it is from “The Word of God” to the “man sent from God, whose name was John”! Jesus himself said concerning John, “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist;” yet, from the greatest of prophets, what a climb it is to get up to Jesus Christ, the Son of God! “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”

7-9. *The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

That John could not do, he could only bear witness to Christ, the true Light, who alone is able to illuminate, in a larger or lesser degree, “every man that cometh into the world.”

**10.** *He was in the world, and the world was made by him and the world knew him not.*

Oh, what terrible estrangement sin has caused between God and man!

What dreadful ignorance sin has created in the human mind! The world was made by Christ, yet “the world knew him not.”

**11.** *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

To those who were chosen as “his own” out of all the nations upon the earth, to those to whom he was specially promised of old, to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, — to these Jesus came, yet they “received him not.”

**12.** *But —*

This is a blessed “But.” Though Christ’s own nation, the Jews, as a whole “received him not,” there was “a remnant according to the election of grace,” there were some who received him. “But” —

**12.** *As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

How came those persons to receive him when others rejected him? There must have been some great change wrought in them to make them different from the rest of their countrymen; and truly there was, for these were twice-born men, —

**13.** *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

So that those who receive Christ, those who truly believe on Christ, are people who have been born, as others have not been born, by a new birth from heaven, a supernatural birth, so that they are a people set apart by themselves as those who have been twice created, first as human beings just like others, and then as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

**14-18.** *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fullness have all we*

*received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

There is no way of knowing God, and being reconciled to God, except as we receive Jesus Christ, his Son, into our hearts, and learn of him, through the Holy Spirit's teaching, all that he delights to reveal to us concerning his Father.

**19-23.** *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice —*

Not the Word, but “the voice” by which the Word was to be made known:

“I am the voice” —

**23-27.** *Of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not, He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*

See the true humility of this faithful servant of Christ. He does not dream of putting his own name side by side with his Master's. The unloosing of shoe latches was work for a slave to do, but if we are privileged to perform this work for Christ, it will make us as kings before him. To do anything for Christ, to have even a menial's place in his palace, is better than being an emperor among men. May we have the portion of those who are not ashamed to unloose the latchet of Christ's shoes!

**28-31.** *These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordon, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man*

*which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not:*

“When first I saw him,” —

**31-34.** *But that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

Since John’s time, many others have borne similar testimony. We also have received him, and rejoice to say that he has baptized us with the Holy Ghost. All that John said of him is true, and much more than John said is also true. He is the Lamb of God, who has taken upon himself the sin of all who believe in him, and therefore he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Oh, that all men would receive the testimony concerning him which we find in this blessed Book, and which we delight to repeat in his name!

## **JOHN 1:1-34**

May the Holy Spirit, who inspired these words, inspire us through them as we read them!

### **1. *In the beginning was the Word.***

The divine Logos, whom we know as the Christ of God. “In the beginning was the Word.” The first words of this gospel remind us of the first words of the Old Testament: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Even then “the Word” was; he existed before all time, even from everlasting.

### **1. *And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.***

I know not how the Deity of Christ can be more plainly declared than in his eternal duration. He is from the beginning. In his glory he was “with God.” In his nature he “was God.”

### **2. *The same was in the beginning with God.***

As we have been singing —

“Ere sin was born, or Satan fell;”

ere there was a creation that could fall,  
“the same was in the beginning with God.”

**3.** *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

He that hung upon the cross was the Maker of all worlds. He that came as an infant, for our sake, was the Infinite. How low he stooped! How high he must have been that he could stoop so low!

**4.** *In him was life;*

Essentially, Eternally.

**4.** *And the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

It never has done so; it never will. You may sometimes call the darkness, the ignorance of men, or the sin of men. If you like, you may call it the wisdom of men, and the righteousness of men, for that is only another form of the same darkness. “The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”

**6.** *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

How very different is the style of this verse from the one that precedes it!

How grand, how sublime, are the Evangelist’s words when he speaks of Jesus! How truly human he becomes, how he dips his pen in ordinary ink, when he writes: “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.” Yet that was a noble testimony to the herald of Christ. John the Baptist was “a man sent from God.”

**7.** *The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.*

Dear friends, if you and I know our real destiny, and are the servants of God, we are sent that men might, through us, believe in Jesus. John was a special witness; but we ought all to be witnesses to complete the chain of testimony. Every Christian man should reckon that he is sent from God to bear witness to the great Light, that, through him, men might believe.

**8, 9.** *He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

There was no light from John except what he reflected from his Lord. All the light comes from Jesus. Every man who comes into

the world with any light borrows his light from Christ. There is no other light; there can be no other. He is the "Light of the World."

**10.** *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

This is a sad verse. He was a stranger in his own house. He was unknown amidst his own handiwork. Men whom he had made, made nothing of him.

"The world knew him not;" did not recognize him.

**11.** *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

That favored circle, the Jewish nation, where revelation had been given, even there, there was no place for him. He must be despised and rejected even by his own nation.

**12, 13.** *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: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

To receive Christ, a man must be born of God. It is the simplest thing in all the world, one would think, to open the door of the heart, and let him in; but no man lets Christ into his heart till first God has made him to be born again, born from above.

**14.** *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

They who saw Christ on earth were highly privileged; but it is a spiritual sight of him alone that is to be desired, and we can have that even now.

How full of grace, how full of truth, he is to all those who are privileged to behold him!

**15, 16.** *John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.*

I wish that we could all say that. Even out of this company, many can say it; and linking our hands with those who have gone before us, and those who are still with us in the faith, we say unitedly, "Of his fullness have all we received," and we hope to receive from it again tonight, for it is still his fullness. There is never

a trace of declining in him. It was fullness when the first sinner came to him; and it is fullness still; it will be fullness to the very end. "And grace for grace." We get grace to reach out to another grace, each grace becoming a stepping-stone to something higher. I do not believe in our rising on the "stepping-stones of our dead selves." They are poor stones; they all lead downwards. The stepping-stones of the living Christ lead upwards; grace for grace, grace upon grace, till grace is crowned with glory.

**17.** *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

We know that the law came by Moses. The law has often burdened us, crushed us, convinced us, condemned us. Let us be equally clear that grace and truth come by this divine channel, "Jesus Christ."

**18.** *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

We do not want to see God apart from Christ. I am perfectly satisfied to see the Eternal Light through his own chosen medium, Christ Jesus. Apart from that medium, the light might blind my eyes. "No man hath seen God at any time." Who can look on the sun? What mind can look on God? But Christ does not hide the Father; he manifests him. "The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

**19-22.** *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. Then said thy unto him, Who art thou? That we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice--*

Not "I am the Word," but "I am the voice." Christ is the essential Word; we are but the voice to make that word sound across the desert of human life.

**23.** *Of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.*

You see, even as a voice, John was not original. That straining after originality, of which we see so much today, finds no warrant

among the true servants of God. Even though John is only a voice, yet he is a voice that quotes the Scriptures: "Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." The more of Scripture we can voice, the better. Our words, what are they? They are but air. His Word, what is it? It is "grace and truth." May we continually be lending a voice to the great Words of God that have gone before!

**24-27.** *And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*

Ah! Dear friends, although it was a lowly expression that John used, you and I often feel that we want something that goes lower even than that. What are we worthy to do for Christ? Yet there are times when, if there is a shoe-latchet to be unloosed, we are too proud to stoop to do it. When there is something to be done that will bring no honour to us, we are too high and mighty to do it. O child of God, if you have ever been in that condition, be greatly ashamed of yourself! John was first in his day, the morning-star of the Light of the gospel, yet even he felt that he was not worthy to do the least thing for Christ. Where shall you and I put ourselves? Paul said that he was "less than the least of all the saints." He ran away with a title that might have been very appropriate for us. Well, we must let him have it, I suppose; and we must try to find another like it; or if we cannot find suitable words, God help us to have the humble feeling, which is better still!

**28, 29.** *These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

John preached a sacrificial Saviour, a sin-bearing Saviour, a sin-atoning Saviour. You and I have nothing else to preach. Let each of us say —

"Tis all my business here below  
To cry, Behold the Lamb!"

**30, 31.** *This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not:*

Although John knew the Saviour personally, he did not know him officially.

He had a token given to him by God, by which he was to know the Messiah; and he did not officially know him till he had that token fulfilled.

**31-33.** *But that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*

John would not know of his own judgment. No doubt he was morally certain that Jesus was the Christ. He had been brought up with him; he knew his mother, he had heard of his wondrous birth; John and Jesus must have been often together; but he was not to use his own judgment in this case, but to wait for the sign from heaven; and until he witnessed it, he did not say a word about it. When he saw the Holy Ghost descend upon him, then he knew that it was even he.

**34.** *And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

Hear ye, then, the witness of John. The Christ, who came from Nazareth to be baptized of him in Jordan, he on whom the Holy Ghost descended like a dove, “this is the Son of God.” This is the sin-bearing Lamb. Oh, that you and I might fulfill John’s expectation, for he spoke that we might believe. He, being dead, yet speaketh. May we believe his witness, and be assured that “this is the Son of God”!

## **JOHN 1:1-37**

John is the majestic Evangelist; he is the high-soaring eagle with the piercing eye. His is the Gospel of the Son of God.

**1-3.** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.*

We cannot describe the Deity of Christ in clearer language than John uses. He was with God; he was God; he did the works of God, for he was the Creator. If any doubt his Deity, they must do so in distinct defiance of the language of Holy Scripture.

**4, 5.** *In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

Christ is still not understood, Jesus is still not known. How should darkness understand light? It opposes light, it has to flee before light, but it does not, it cannot understand light. O God, work a miracle in our dark hearts, and fill them with the light of Christ!

**6, 7.** *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.*

That is our business, too. We who are ministers sent from God bear witness of the Light, that all men through him may believe. Oh, how often we go home, and cry, "Who hath believed our report?" We do not ask you to believe in us; no, but in our Master, whose heralds we are. If we can lead you to faith in him, we shall be glad indeed; but, if not, we will sorrow because we have missed our mark, and failed in our purpose.

**8, 9.** *He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

If any man has saving light, true light, he gets it through Christ. There is no other light; all other light is but darkness visible. The light in which we see God comes from Jesus.

**10.** *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

Strange was it that the Creator came to his own earth, and yet he was unknown. Men mistook him, they hated him, they crucified him whom they ought to have entertained with sacred hospitality, and worshipped with holy loyalty.

**11, 12.** *He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 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:*

All men are not the sons of God; the doctrine of the universal Fatherhood is utterly untrue. They only become the sons of God

who receive Christ, and believe on his name; else are they heirs of wrath, even as others:

“To them gave he power to become the sons of God.”

**13.** *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

There is another birth beside the natural one; never does the birth of the flesh make us Christians. If our ancestry should be a line of saints yet are we born sinners; we must be born again if we are to become saints. If we could trace our pedigree to a perfect man, if such there be, yet the birth by the flesh would not avail us. Sons of God are.” born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

**14.** *And the Word was made flesh,*

Here was the incarnation of him who made all things. He that is God “was made flesh.”

**14.** *And dwelt among us, (and we —*

The apostles —

**14.** *Beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

Oh, all ye who would know Christ, learn that he is worth the knowing! He is full of grace for your sinnership, and full of truth for your ignorance. He can cleanse and he can teach; there is everything in him that you need. You shall not be deceived, for he is full of truth; you shall not be rejected, for he is full of grace.

**15-18.** *John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time;*

He is too high, too spiritual, to be perceived by human senses.

**18.** *The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

What of God we need to know, we may see in Christ; enough to save us, enough to sanctify us, enough to make us all like the only-begotten Son of the Father.

**19, 20.** *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.*

With indignation he must have repelled the idea that he was the Messiah:

“I am not the Christ.”

**21-23.** *And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice —*

Humbly he reduces himself to a voice; but he was not “a voice and nothing more.” There was much that was mighty and wise in that voice.

**23-27.** *Of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*

How John hides himself behind his Master! He was a most worthy man, a truly great man; but he counted himself unworthy of the most menial service for Christ, and felt honoured by filling the office of a slave to unloose his Master’s shoe’s latchet. It is better to be the slave of Christ than to rule vast empires; he who truly serveth him is glorified thereby.

**28, 29.** *These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

Now is he bringing out his message; now is he pointing out his Master.

**30, 31.** *This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not:*

John knew Jesus very well; but he did not know him as the Sent One of God, the Messiah, till after he had received the sign and token at his baptism: "I knew him not."

**31-34.** *But that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

Jesus and John must have been well acquainted with one another; they were closely related, but John was not to know anybody as the Messiah till he received the token from God. When he saw that token, then he officially knew, and he bore instant witness: "This is the Son of God."

**35, 36.** *Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked,*

With holy reverence, with loving awe, gazing upon this extraordinary Person "as he walked", —

**36, 37.** *He saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*

This is our one business tonight, to cry, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

### **JOHN 1:15-37**

**15.** *John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.*

He was not before John in the order of human birth, yet he was truly before John, for he had an eternal pre-existence, as he was none other than the uncreated Son of God.

**16-21.** *And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from*

*Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered; No.*

As they meant, “Art thou, literally, the prophet Elijah risen from the dead?

“John said,” “I am not.” “Art thou that prophet of who Moses foretold?”

“And he answered, No.” John gave short, sharp answers to these cavilers.

He was not a man of dainty words and polished periods, especially in dealing with such people as they were.

**22, 23.** *Then said they unto him, who art thou that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice--*

Not “the Word.”— Christ is that, but John was “the voice.”

**23-37.** *Of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold*

*the lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*

In the third chapter of the same Gospel, we have yet another testimony by John the Baptist concerning Christ.

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 3:1-12; JOHN 1:15-37; 3:22-36.

### **JOHN 1:19-33**

**19-28.** *And this in the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto Him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not: He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet, I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

Was that the place where the Israelites caressed the Jordan? It is said to have been so; and truly this is the place where we cross the Jordan too —come out of old Judaism into the true faith of the revealed Christ.

**29.** *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

I think I hear the Elijah-like tones of that son of the desert, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

**30.** *This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.*

Ah! how infinitely before John; how before him? Having no beginning of days, before him in his exalted nature, before him in his superior rank and office!

**31.** *And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.*

It was by baptism that the Christ was to be known. John knew more of Jesus Christ than anybody else, yet he did not know him to be the Lamb of God until he had baptized him.

**32, 33.** *And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me. Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*

I doubt not that John had assuredly guessed that Jesus was the person; but he had nothing to do with guesses: he was a witness for God, and he could only speak as God revealed things to him.

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 1:19-33; 19:1-16.

## **JOHN 1:19-51**

**19, 20.** *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou ? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.*

“I am not the One anointed of God to save mankind.”

**21.** *And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias ?*

“Art thou Elijah come back to earth?”

**21.** *And he saith, I am not.*

For, though indeed he was the true spiritual Elijah who was to come as the forerunner of the Messiah, yet, in the sense in which they asked the question, the only truthful answer was, “I am not.”

**21.** *Art thou that prophet ?*

The long-expected prophet foretold by Moses?

**21-23.** *And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice –*

That is all; a voice and nothing more. John did not profess to be the Word;

he was only the voice which vocalized that Word, and made it audible to human ears. He came to bear witness to the Christ, but he was not himself the Christ: “I am the voice”

**23-27.** *Of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. and they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then., if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*

How wisely does God always choose and fashion his servants! John is evidently just the man for his place; he bears testimony to Christ very clearly; he earnestly turns away all attention from himself to his Master; and he has such a reverent esteem for him of whom he is the herald that he puts all honour and glory upon him.

**28-30.** *These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing, The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the-sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.*

You know, dear friends, that Christ existed from all eternity, so, in very truth, he was before John; you know, too, the glory and the excellency of our Divine Master's person, so that, in another sense, he was and is before John and all other creatures whom he has made.

**31-34.** *And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaing on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

The secret sign of the descent of the Spirit, in dovelike form, upon our Lord, was given to John; and as soon as he saw it, he knew of a surety that Jesus was the Sent One, the Messiah, and that he must point him out to the people.

**35, 36.** *Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!*

This was the same text from which he had preached the day before, and it was the same sermon, somewhat shortened. So should it be with us.

His only righteousness I show,  
His saving truth proclaim;  
'Tis all my business here below  
To cry, 'Behold the Lamb!'

**37.** *And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*

Thus John was losing his own disciples. By his testimony to the truth, he was sending them to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, and he did it well and gracefully. There are many who would find it a hard task to reduce the number of their disciples; but it was not so with John.

**38-46.** *Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye ? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou ? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. and when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone. The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth ? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*

It was all a seeing gospel. John said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Then Jesus said, "Come and see;" and now Philip says the same. Faith is that blessed sight by which we discern the Saviour. Whoso looks to Christ by faith shall live.

**47.** *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*

“There is no craft or deception in this man, as there was in Jacob; he is a true Israelite, like Israel at his best.”

**48.** *Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me ? Jesus answered and said unto Him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.*

What Nathanael had been doing there, we do not know; probably he had been meditating, or he may have been engaged in prayer. But this announcement was a proof to Nathanael that Jesus could see all things, and read men’s hearts, and know what they were doing in their chosen retreats: “When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.” Christ knows all of you who came in here, tonight, in a prayerful spirit, seeking him. And whenever men are seeking him, be you sure that he is also seeking them.

**49.** *Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.*

“Thou sawest what I was doing in secret; and by that token I perceive that thou art God’s own Son.”

**50.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou!’ thou shalt see greater things than these.*

Those who are ready to believe Christ, on what may be thought to be slender evidence, shall “see greater things than these.” “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” They shall gaze upon a wonderful sight by-and-by.

**51.** *And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*

“Thou art a true Israelite, and thou shalt have Israel’s vision. Thou shalt see the same sight as thy father Jacob saw when he fell asleep with a stone for his pillow, only thy vision shall be far grander than his. Christ always knows how to meet the needs of our hearts, and to give us something in accordance with our own expressions, and to make his answers fit our requests, only that he always far exceeds all that we ask or even think, blessed be his holy name!”

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 1:19-51; and MATTHEW 4:12-24.

## JOHN 1:29-42

**29.** *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of god, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

John lost no time. He had no sooner discovered the Saviour than he bore witness of him. "The next day." As soon as ever his eyes lighted upon Jesus, he had his testimony ready for him. "Behold!" said he, "the Lamb of God."

**30-33.** *This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me: And I knew him not: but that he should manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not:*

At first.

**33, 34.** *But he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.*

Notice how very clear John is. There is no mistaking him. He repeated himself lest there should be any possibility of an error, and he gives the detail of the mode by which he recognized the Saviour, in order that all might be persuaded to accept Jesus as in very truth the Messiah and the Son of God, so that we are to preach very plainly — not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but with demonstration of the Spirit and with power. What have we to conceal? Nay, we have everything to reveal and our business is that men should be convinced that Jesus is the Christ, and should come and put their trust in him

**35, 36.** *Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples: And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God?*

There is no objection to preaching the same sermon twice if it be on such a matter as this. "Behold the Lamb of God," he said one day, and the next day he did not vary the phraseology. He had no new metaphor — no new figure — with which to set forth Christ, but, as striking a nail upon the head and the same nail will help to fasten it, and may do more service than bringing out a new nail, so

he gets to the same word and the same subject — “Behold the Lamb of God.”

**37.** *And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*

They went beyond their teacher. And oh! what a mercy it is if our hearers can go Christward far beyond us. John was well content to be left behind if they followed Jesus; and so may any minister of Christ rejoice if his people will follow Jesus, even if they go far beyond his attainments.

**38.** *Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?*

Christ wants intelligent followers: so he asks the question, “What seek ye?”

**38, 39.** *They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see,*

Which is often his answer to enquirers — “Come and see.” “Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good.” Learn by experience. Do not merely hear what I say, but come and see.

**39-42.** *They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus,*

This is how the kingdom began to grow — by individual effort. “Andrew findeth Simon”: one convert must bring another: “and he brought him to Jesus.”

**42.** *And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone,*

There was a meaning in the change of names, for there was about to be a change of character — the timid son of a dove soon to become a very rock for the Church.

This exposition consisted of readings from ISAIAH 40:1-17; 25-31. JOHN 1:29-42.

## **JOHN 1:29-51**

**29.** *The next day —*

This chapter is a record of the events that occurred on different days. Sometimes God does great things in a single day; one extraordinary day may have more in it than a hundred ordinary years. It is well for us to try to live by the day, and not to let any day pass without some good action having been done in it. Let us never have to cry, "I have lost a day."

**29.** *John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

We ought never to be slow in delivering such a message as that which John the Baptist uttered. I do not wonder that, as soon as ever John knew that Jesus was the Messiah, he told the good news to others. Hast thou found Jesus? Tell thy brother tonight; or, if not tonight, go as soon as thou canst, and bid him, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

**30-34.** *This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am. I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

John was acquainted with Jesus, for they were related to one another, and were brought up together, but he did not officially know him as the Messiah until he saw the Holy Spirit descending and remaining on him; for that was the Lord's token by which he was to recognize him. He refused, therefore, to follow any knowledge or judgment of his own. He would not know Jesus as the Christ until he saw the private mark for which the Lord had told him to look. As soon as he saw that, then John said that he knew him; and as soon as he thus knew him, he began to preach him. Has the Lord given thee in thy soul a token that Christ is thy Saviour? Dost thou know him by the witness of the Holy Ghost? Then go and speak of him to others and, like John, say, "Behold the Lamb of God." Let this be your one business between here and heaven.

**35, 36.** *Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!*

“Again the next day.” See how the Evangelist goes by days in his record. John preached the same sermon two days running, and if you proclaim Christ and him crucified, you may preach him two hundred days running, but you will never preach him too often. If you preach Christ as the Lamb of God, the great Sin-bearer, you may be always at that blessed work. There are some who very seldom preach Christ as bearing the sin of men; so that others of us must do it all the oftener to make up for their shortcomings. As for me, I can say with Charles Wesley, —

“His only righteousness I show,  
His saving truth proclaim;  
‘tis all my business here below,  
To cry, ‘Behold the Lamb!’”

**37.** *And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*

It is hard preaching when you preach away your congregation, but John did this deliberately, He wished these two no longer to be his disciples, but to become the disciples of Jesus. He had mastered the meaning of his own words, “He must increase, but I must decrease,” and he was quite willing that it should be so: “The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”

**38, 39.** *Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see.*

He gave them a full invitation to come to the place where he tarried, and see for themselves. That is what Jesus still says, “Come and see.” If any of you want to know him, “Come and see.” You are perfectly welcome to “Come and see” all that Jesus has to show you.

**39.** *They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.*

The best part of that day was the portion which they spent with Jesus it was the best day they had ever enjoyed, for they lived with Jesus. It was also the beginning of better days for these two disciples; for, having once lived with Jesus, they learnt never to live without him. Oh, that we also may abide with him!

**40, 41.** *One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*

Where should missionary work begin? A brother should begin with his brother. It is all very well to have a desire to go to the heathen in Africa; you had better begin work as a missionary in England, and then go to Africa. He who cannot win his brother is not likely to win anybody else. "He first findeth his own brother Simon:" this Andrew, who was afterwards to bring so many to Christ, must begin at home, and succeed there. If we are not faithful with one or two relatives, how can God trust us with a pulpit and a congregation?

**42.** *And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona:*

"Simon, son of a dove, thy name may point thee out as being timid; mind where thou dost wing thy flight."

**42.** *Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone.*

Something more solid than the son of a pigeon; something more stable than the son of a dove. Christ changes men's names, and changes their natures, too. He can make the most fickle of us to become firm and steadfast. Oh, that he would thus work by his grace upon us!

**43, 44.** *The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.*

"The day following." See, friends, what a wonderful chapter this is. There is a book called, *The Book of Days*; I call this chapter the chapter of days. Every day seems memorable for some great event. "Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter," was a poor, miserable village; but God greatly honoured it. Great works often begin in little places. The best of beings came out of the despised town of Nazareth, and three of the best of men, Philip, Andrew, and Peter, came out of Bethsaida.

**45.** *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*

True faith may make blunders. Jesus was not the son of Joseph, except by reputation, and he was Jesus of Bethlehem quite as much as he was Jesus of Nazareth; but true faith is accepted of God even though it makes some mistakes. It believes God's Word, and it believes God's Son, and therefore it shall be accepted.

**46.** *And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*

Christ had said, "Come and see." Now Philip used the same words, "Come and see." It is always right to follow the example that the Lord Jesus has set us.

**47, 48.** *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me?*

You may remember that, a short time ago, I preached a sermon upon Nathanael. He was a kind of Jewish John Blunt, a man who always spoke his mind. He had a mind, and he had a mind to speak it, and he spoke his mind. So, the moment that Christ spoke of him, he asked, "Whence knowest thou me?" He was conscious that Christ did know him, and being a man who was altogether free from cunning and craftiness, he pointedly asked how Christ came to know him.

**48.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.*

What was he doing under the fig tree? Jesus knew, and Nathanael knew, but nobody else knew, and perhaps nobody else ever will know. That was a secret between Christ and Nathanael. He was doing something there that he regarded as quite private, and the Saviour's allusion to his being under the fig tree was the plainest proof he could have of Christ's divinity. "Oh!" thought he, "he who can remind me of that secret transaction must be God."

**49, 50.** *Nathanael answered and saith unto him: Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.*

You who are honest in heart, you who can be convinced by a single argument, — and, mark you, one good argument is as convincing as twenty good arguments, and a great deal better than a

hundred bad ones, — you who are willing to be led by a single thread shall be led. If you are willing to believe on what is clear evidence, you shall have more evidence: “thou shalt see greater things than these.” God will show much to that man who has eyes with which to see it. He who will not see, and does not wish to see, shall grow more and more blind, and the darkness shall thicken about him.

**51.** *And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.*

He could see actually what Jacob saw only in a dream, when he beheld that wonderful stairway of light which leads from earth to heaven, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who by his manhood and his Godhead bridges the distance between us and God.

## **JOHN 2:1-11**

Our Saviour had lived on the earth for thirty years, and had worked no miracle. There was the hiding of his power. He had been subject unto his parents, and had lived in obscurity. Now he has broken through the obscurity, and he begins his public ministry by working a miracle.

**1.** *And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee;*

“The third day.” John keeps a kind of diary for Christ. In those first days there was something for every day, and they were a specimen of the whole life of the Saviour. He could never say, like Titus, “I have lost a day.” Every day had its deed, glorifying to God, and blessed to men. Let us also try to labour for Christ every day; let there be no day without its mark. May God grant that there may be something to make every day memorable! “And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee.” The first miracle of our Lord was not wrought at Jerusalem; but away there in the back settlements, in “Galilee of the Gentiles.” It was necessary for him to be seen, and to work miracles which might be seen; but he began in an obscure region, among a despised people.

**1.** *And the mother of Jesus was there:*

This expression leads to the belief that there was some kind of kinship between the bridegroom or the bride and the mother of

Jesus, for it is not said that she was invited to be there, but that she “was there.”

**2. *And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.***

Happy marriage, where Christ is invited to be present! Where Christ goes, his disciples go. If they suffer with him, they also rejoice with him. If he goes to a feast, they must go, too: “Both Jesus was called, and his disciples.” They were only five; but five is a large number to add to a poor family’s wedding party. It shows the generosity of their heart that they invited Jesus to come and bring his disciples; and he went to put honour upon marriage, especially as he foresaw that the day would come when the apostate church of Rome would reckon marriage to be dishonourable, and not permit one who was married to officiate as a minister.

**3. *And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.***

I notice that John calls Mary “the mother of Jesus.” I suppose he had in his mind the dying word of Christ, “Behold thy mother!” Such things make a deep impression upon us; and we are apt, when writing, to use the phrases that have been burnt into the memory. “The mother of Jesus.” Because she has been too much exalted in the Romish church, I fear that we run to the other extreme, and think too little of this woman to whom the angel Gabriel said, “Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.” “They wanted wine.” They had not been long married before there was want in the house. Even in the brightest days of life, they wanted something more; and the mother of Jesus saw that they were in want, and that the marriage festival would be dishonoured; so she went to her son and she said, “They have no wine.” I fear she spoke a little like an ordinary mother addressing her son; but the time had come when that discipline was to end. Mary was not his mother as the Son of God. He was about to work a miracle, and he would have her and all his relatives know that he would not use his miraculous powers merely for their advantage; but for the glory of God and the instruction of men.

**4. *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.***

It was a very difficult position for him to be in, to act the part of a loving and obedient son as far as his manhood was concerned, and

yet, as the Son of God, by no means to compromise his divine character, but to stand out there as being under no influence of the flesh. Just as we are not to know Christ after the flesh, so he no longer knew mother, or brother, or friend, according to earthly relationship; and when Mary intruded her motherhood upon him, it was but right and fitting that he should say, "What have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." The Saviour had an hour for everything; an hour for suffering, and an hour for working; and he did everything punctually, promptly to the minute. That was one of the beauties of his life: "Mine hour is not yet come." Perhaps he meant, "My hour to work this miracle is not yet come;" and he would not be hurried by anybody. Beloved, it is not easy to be familiar with Christ, as I trust we are, and yet always to maintain humble deference to his sacred will. Never let us pray as if we were dictators, or his equals. We must keep our place, however near we come to the dear bosom of our Lord. He is still in heaven, and we are upon earth. He is the Master, we are the servants; and if we are as favored as his mother was, we must not go too far, as she did.

*5. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

This holy woman took the rebuke in silence. She said nothing; she felt the force of Christ's words, she proved that she did by now fully believing that he would do something or other. Had he not said, "Mine hour is not yet come"? Did not that mean that the hour would come, and that he would do something by-and-by? So she quietly accepted his reproof. Oh, you who are in great trouble, you feel as if you could force the hand of Christ; but you must not think of doing that. Even if you could have power over him, you would be very foolish to use it. Let him alone; he knows best how and when to show his grace towards you. Keep silence before him, and in patience commit your way unto him.

*6. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.*

I admire the accuracy of the Holy Spirit. John does not know exactly how much these vessels held; they were not made to measure things in, so he writes, "containing two or three firkins apiece." Let us always speak correctly; sometimes, "almost" or "thereabouts" will be words that will just save our truthfulness. Let

us not speak positively when we do not know; and when the accuracy of a statement is necessary, and we cannot give it in terms that are definite, let us give it in words like these, “containing two or three firkins apiece.” These were great “waterpots of stone.” Stone will not, as a rule, hold the flavour of anything that has been in it, like an earthen vessel would do; so these pots, which had contained nothing else but water, could not be suspected of having any lees of wine concealed therein, or any flavouring material that would make the water taste like wine. No, they were genuine stone waterpots.

*7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.*

There was no fear of anything but water being there: “They filled them up to the brim.” They obeyed Christ to the letter. If Christ says to you, “Fill the waterpots with water”, fill them up to the brim. Never cut down his commandments; carry them out as far as the largest interpretation can go.

When you are bidden to believe in him, believe in him up to the brim. When you are told to love him, love him up to the brim. When you are commanded to serve him, serve him up to the brim.

*8. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.*

“Draw out now.” “Now.” He had not turned the water into wine by any incantation. He simply willed it, and it was done. He said, “Draw out now.” He did not want to leave it unnoticed, because he had not worked a miracle before, and he could not say whether this was one. He was sure it was; so he said to the servants, when they had filled the waterpots with water, “Draw out now. Do not bring it to me for me to taste it; I know what it is. Take it to the chairman of the festival, to him who sits at the head of the table, and is the judge of the wine: “and they bare it.” The holy confidence of Christ is admirable. May we be able, by faith, so to work, with a calm consciousness of divine help! But notice this. Whenever the Lord fills any of you with a blessing, think that you hear him say, “Draw out now.” He does not fill these pots that they may keep full. “Draw out now.” Did you have a good time last Monday night at the prayer-meeting? Some of us had. “Draw out now.” Have you lived near to God of late, and are you very happy? “Draw out now.” If he

has filled you up to the brim, draw out now; for, if you try to store it up, it will become useless. Selfishness will poison it all.

**9.** *When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,*

There was no collusion, for the governor, who tasted it, did not know where it came from; and the servants, who knew where it came from, did not taste it, so that they did not know what it was like. If anybody objects to the Saviour making wine, I think that the best reply is that all the wine which is made of water will do nobody any hurt, and the more of it the better; and this was so made, certainly. They say that there is a devil in every grape. There were no grapes here; and I am afraid that there is not much of them in most of the wine that is made nowadays; there is something worse than devil in that.

**10.** *And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.*

That the governor of the feast did not understand, but he admired it and here is a picture of what our Lord always does. He gives his people the best last. At first, the wine of the kingdom is mingled with much bitterness, salt tears of sorrow flow into it, but it improves as we go on; and when we shall drink it with him, in the kingdom of God, what will it be like? The joy of Christ's love on earth is heaven, but when we get to heaven, and drink it fresh from the everlasting spring, what will that joy be? Oh, the blessedness laid up for the people of God! We pluck some of the fruit from the trees, and eat it; but the fruits laid up in the fruit-chamber, to get ripe by-and-by, are the very pick of the fruit of the tree of life. You who live for the world have had your best already; but, as for our feast with Christ, we go from good to better, and from better to the best.

**11.** *This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory;*

Moses turned water into blood; Christ turned water into wine. One brought a curse upon the common things of daily life; the other put an added sweetness and blessing into them.

**11.** *And his disciples believed on him.*

They did believe on him before; but now they had ocular demonstration of his divine power and Godhead; and they believed as they had not believed before. May you and I often make distinct progress in faith, so that it may be said of us also, “His disciples believed on him”!

### **JOHN 3:1-15**

**1-3.** *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

There must be a new birth because a new name is absolutely necessary for the discernment of spiritual things. The natural man cannot comprehend spiritual things, they must be spiritually discerned. The new birth is therefore necessary that we may have a spirit within us which can see or understand the kingdom of God; but until a man is born again, “he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

**4, 5.** *Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old/ can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

We understand the passage to mean, “Water, that is, the Spirit;” but it may refer to the purifying influence of the Word as symbolized by water. I do not think that baptism is referred to here at all.

**6.** *That which is born of the flesh is flesh;*

Parents may be the most devout people who ever lived, but that which is born of them is only flesh.

**6.** *And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

It is only then, as we are born of the Spirit of God that there is any spiritual life in us whatsoever.

**7, 8.** *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof,*

*but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

He undergoes a mysterious change, he becomes a new man, he enters into a new life which others cannot comprehend; though they hear the sound of it, they cannot tell whence this man's new life comes, or whither it goes. He has become a spiritual person, not comprehended of natural men.

**9-10.** *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knoweth not these things?*

“So learned in the law of God, art thou ignorant of the Spirit of God? Hast thou read the law so many times, and yet not found out that natural births and outward washings are of no avail in spiritual things?”

**11, 12.** *Verily, verily I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*

“If, at the very entrance to the kingdom of heaven, you say, ‘How can these things be?’ what will you say if I take you into the central metropolis of truth, and introduce you to the great King himself?”

**13, 15.** *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

This exposition consisted of readings from NUMBERS 21:1-9; AND JOHN 3:1-15.

### **JOHN 3:1-18**

If you were sent for to visit a dying man, and you wished to select a chapter which would set the truth before him very briefly and very clearly, you could not make a better choice than this 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of the Gospel according to John. So, as we are all dying men and women, let us read it with that same desire, and may the Holy Spirit apply it to our hearts as we read it.

**1, 2.** *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night,—*

That was better than not coming at all. “Better late than never.” Better come to Christ in the dark than not come to him at all.

**2.** *And said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

This was good reasoning on the part of Nicodemus. If he did not at first go as far as he afterwards did, it argued well for him that he went as far as he could. O thou who art troubled with unbelief, believe as much as thou canst; and then cry, “Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief; and, especially, help me to get rid of it.” Confess to Christ what thou dost believe, and he will add more to thy belief.

**3.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom, of God.*

He cannot understand what it is; he cannot know anything about it; he cannot see it.

**4, 5.** *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

If the “water” mentioned here relates to baptism,—which I greatly question,—then, certainly, it shows the way of entrance for a believer, publicly, into the kingdom of God. But if it relates to the purifying power of the Spirit of God,—as I believe it does,—then it teaches us that no man enters into the kingdom of God, and becomes a partaker of its privileges,—which is something more than merely seeing it,—except the Spirit of God shall be to him as water purifying him from sin. This is the reason why a man cannot enter into the spiritual kingdom until he is born again, born from above.

**6.** *That which is born of the flesh is flesh;*

And “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

**6.** *And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

And only the new creature, which is thus born, can, by any possibility, understand or enter into the possession of the spiritual things which belong to the kingdom of God.

**7, 8.** *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit is mysterious, like the wind, and so is the creature that is “born of the Spirit.” The spiritual man often cannot understand himself, he is so mysterious a being;—how then shall he be able fully to comprehend how that wondrous new life is created within him? All we know is that he is a new creation, as much the work of eternal power as our first creation.

**9, 10.** *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*

“These things” that lie at the very root of everything. “Art thou a Rabbi and dost thou not know this?” Alas, good Master, there are still many Rabbis who do not understand this; many, who have taken the highest degree the University can give them, yet do not know in their own souls what it is to be born again!

**11.** *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.*

Spiritual men declare that there are spiritual things. They know them, and have seen them; and they have a right to be believed, for they are not liars. They are honest men, and speak what they do know; yet, often, their witness is not received. They need not be surprised at this, for it was the same with their Master.

**12.** *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*

If these elementary truths about the new birth stagger you, what is the use of my going on to anything higher? You would not understand it, or receive it.

**13.** *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

He alone knows the secrets of God who has been with God, who has come from God, and who is still with God.

**14-18.** *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

God give us, even now, deliverance from condemnation through faith in his dear Son, and prevent our being condemned through our unbelief, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

### **JOHN 3:1-18**

If we were asked to read to a dying man who did not know the gospel, we should probably select this chapter as the most suitable one for such an occasion; and what is good for dying men is good for us all, for that is what we are; and how soon we may be actually at the gates of death, none of us can tell.

**1, 2.** *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night,*

We do not know the names of many other Pharisees, but we do know the name of this one because God had loved him with an everlasting love, and therefore with lovingkindness did he draw him to the Saviour's feet. "The same came to Jesus by night." Possibly, he was too busy to come during the day. Anyhow, it was better to come to Jesus late at night than not to come to him at all. From the fact that, after our Lord's death, it is said that he was the man who "at the first came to Jesus by night," I gather that he did come then partly out of timidity and partly also out of candor. He wanted to know more about Christ before he committed himself, so he came privately, to see and hear for himself. It does not matter if any of you also come to Christ by night if you like. Our Saviour has a night-bell to his door, and he is quite willing to be the Physician of your soul, even if you ring him up at midnight.

**2.** *And said unto him, Rabbi,*

He begins very respectfully, and so far, so good; but then, Judas said, "Hail, Master," and kissed Christ, when he went to Gethsemane to betray him.

*2. We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

Dear friends, if any of you do not know all about Christ that you wish to know, or that can be known, make use of what you do know about him. Nicodemus had not yet learned the truth of Christ's Deity, but he knew that he was a teacher sent from God, and that God was with him.

*3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Christ's formula, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee," was a new style of speech for the Pharisees to hear, for they quoted Rabbi this, and Rabbi that; but Jesus gives himself as his own sufficient authority, with an egoism which cannot be blamed, and which no true disciple of his ever questions, for Christ is himself the truth, and whatever he says is to be humbly received by all his followers. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He has no notion of what it really is; he cannot even see it, for he is blind to it until he is born again. It is for this reason that our most lucid explanations of the gospel are altogether lost upon unregenerate men and women. However bright a light God may make our ministry to be, bright light is of no use to blind men, and they must be born again before they can even see the kingdom of God.

*4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

His questions proved that he could not see the kingdom of God. He blundered over the letter of Christ's message; he misunderstood the metaphor that Christ used; but did Jesus therefore not give Nicodemus any further instruction? Oh, no; listen: —

*5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

There must be a purifying operation upon his heart and mind, he must be spiritually washed and cleansed, and the Spirit of God must create him anew; otherwise he cannot possibly enter into the kingdom of God.

*6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

So that the best child who ever was born, even though he were, like Saul of Tarsus, “of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews;” yet even he, inasmuch as he “is born of the flesh, is flesh,” and not “spirit.” Everything which comes to us by our first birth can be nothing better than flesh, and what can you get out of flesh but flesh? The only “evolution” that can come of the flesh is corruption. There must be another birth if you are to get anything but flesh: “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Fleshly things are understood by the flesh, and spiritual things must be spiritually discerned; hence the absolute necessity of a second birth, a Spirit birth, that we may first see and then enter the spiritual kingdom of God.

*7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

This ruler of the Jews was full of astonishment at this strange doctrine, so Christ said to him, “Marvel not.”

*8. The wind bloweth —*

That is, the Spirit bloweth —

*8. Where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.*

This is a great mystery, and our Saviour connected it with the most mysterious thing in the whole realm of nature, — the wind, — a thing which has never been seen, and which must remain a mystery to us, at least while we are upon the earth. Christ uses this mysterious force as an emblem of the Holy Spirit, and of those who are “born of the Spirit.”

*9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?*

He was puzzled and perplexed, like a man in a maze; the Saviour had given him something to think of; and I wish that, when we preach to a congregation, or when we talk to individuals, we

would not aim at dazzling them with our fine phrases, but would seek to set the truth before their minds, that it might lie there, to be studied, and thought of, and to be like seed which, in after days, would germinate, and bring forth a harvest to God's praise and glory. Our Saviour is an example to all of us who preach; and, in this instance, he shows us the wisdom of not keeping back the mysteries of the kingdom. I am greatly afraid that many preachers would have begun by talking to Nicodemus of some point that was common to both Judaism and Christianity, and that they would have gone on to apologize for the peculiar mysteries of Christianity, all of which would have been waste of breath, and worse than that. Do not so, my brethren; but speak out the truth boldly, and leave the Eternal Spirit to make use of it as he pleases.

**10-12.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*

The Saviour as good as told Nicodemus that he did not come to argue or to reason with him, but to bear witness to absolute certainties, of which he himself was absolutely sure. So he said to him, "If you do not receive our witness concerning these things, which lie on the very threshold of the kingdom," — yet, mark you, he had been speaking about regeneration, the great mystery of the new birth, — "it is of no use going on to still higher themes." So it is evident that the kingdom of Christ requires great faith, — faith on the very threshold of it — to believe the wondrous mystery of the new birth, and still greater faith, as deeper truths, the more heavenly things of the kingdom are revealed to us.

**13.** *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

Now Nicodemus must have been indeed puzzled. Here was a man who had come down from heaven, yet who had gone up to heaven, and was still there, although he was at that moment talking to Nicodemus! Without the Spirit of God to explain the mystery, he could not make top or bottom of it.

**14, 15.** *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Mark, dear friends, the blending of the different truths in this wonderful chapter; there is no keeping back the necessity of the new birth, and there is no cutting down of the glorious doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus, he puts the whole matter as broadly as it could be put.

**16, 17.** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

If any one of you says, "I cannot cause myself to be born again," that is quite true; yet listen to this message in the same chapter which speaks of the new birth: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

**18.** *He that believeth on him is not condemned:*  
That is a grand truth.

**18.** *But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

His not believing is the master-sin, the surest evidence of his being, in his heart, an enemy to God. If he refuses to trust Christ, the matchless gift of the Father's love, he must be desperately set on mischief, and he "is condemned already." These two truths of the necessity of the new birth, and of the fact that everyone who believes on Christ is saved, are quite consistent and in perfect harmony with each other. God grant to us the grace to know them both by experience! Never talk about "reconciling" them, for they have never fallen out with one another. God grant that we may find them both true in our own lives, for his dear Son's sake! Amen.

### **JOHN 3:1-18**

If you were called in to see a person who was dying, and wished to read a chapter from the Word of God, and you were afraid that the sick one did not know the way of salvation, you could not select a better portion than the one we are about to read. I have chosen it in

the hope that some may now learn from it what they must do to be saved.

**1, 2.** *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night,*

Perhaps he was very busy during the day. It is better to come to Jesus at night than not to come to him at all. All hours are convenient to Christ; you may come to him when you are at home tonight. When everybody else is asleep, Jesus is still awake. In all probability, however, Nicodemus did not wish to commit himself by coming to Christ by day. He had not yet tried and tested him, so he would not be thought to be Christ's follower till he had first had a quiet private talk with him. As a ruler of the Jews, he was wise in acting thus discreetly.

**2.** *And said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

He admitted the truth as far as he could see it. The miracles of Christ proved him to be a divinely-commissioned teacher. Always be willing to go as far as you can go in the pursuit of truth. If you cannot see everything at once, see all that you can see. Be not of a cavilling spirit; be frank and teachable as this man was.

**3.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

It is such a mystery, a thing of such a marvilous character, that his old nature cannot see it. He must have new eyes, be must be a new man, be must be born again, before he can "see the kingdom of God." Have you caught this idea, my dear hearer? Do you understand that you cannot polish yourself up to a certain point, and then see the kingdom of God? You must be born again; there must be a radical change in you, a new birth, a birth from above, if you are ever to see the kingdom of God.

**4, 5.** *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

At first Jesus said that a man could not see the kingdom of God except he was born again; now he tells Nicodemus that a man cannot enter the kingdom except he is born of water and of the Spirit. There must be a cleansing; he must be “born of water.” There must be a spiritual life; he must be “born of the Spirit”, or he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

**6.** *That which is born of the flesh is flesh;*

Nothing more. However godly your father, however gracious your mother, all that is “born of the flesh is flesh.”

**6.** *And that which is born of the spirit is spirit.*

There must be, then, a Spirit-birth, or else you have no spirit; you belong not to the spiritual realm; and you cannot see and you cannot enter the spiritual kingdom.

**7, 8.** *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof,*

The sounding of the wind blowing through the trees, —

**8.** *But canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth:*

Where it begins, whither it goes, or where it comes to an end, you cannot tell.

**8.** *So is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

You do not know where the spirit-life begins; and you cannot tell to what it will lead. There are heights to which the spirit-life can carry you, of which you have never dreamed; this is a mystery beyond your ken.

**9.** *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?*

He did not deny that they might be; but he asked how they could be. Ah, many a man has asked the same question! “How may I be made anew? How may I become a new creature?” Only he that makes all things can make all things new. The new birth is as great a wonder as creation itself; and there is as much, and a great deal more, to be wrought upon you to make you a Christian, as has been wrought upon you to make you a man.

**10.** *Jesus answered and said, unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*

These truths lie on the very doorstep of our holy religion. There are deeper and higher mysteries than these.

**11, 12.** *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things,*

Common-place things, the lower things of faith. "If I have told you these,"

**12.** *And ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*

There are mysteries in our holy religion which we would not tell to everybody. It would be casting pearls before swine to mention them to unregenerate men. Christ tells Nicodemus that the primary truths must be believed before the more advanced doctrines can be revealed.

**13.** *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even, the Son of man which is in heaven.*

It is Christ who knows everything. He understands all mysteries; he can teach all truth, for he has been in heaven, he came down to earth, and he has gone back again to heaven. Now, perhaps, some of you will be saying, "How are we to be saved? If there is no salvation without the new birth, how can we obtain the new birth?" Listen. The same chapter which tells you of the mystery of regeneration, tells you of the simple way of salvation by faith in Christ.

**14, 15.** *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

"Whosoever." If you believe in Christ, you are born again. If you trust him, you have the new life. This simple way of salvation is not contradictory to the way of salvation by the new birth, it is the same thing stated in a form that we can comprehend.

**16.** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

This text has saved thousands of souls. The constellation in the heavens, called the Great Bear, has in it the two pointers which direct the eye of the observer to the pole star; and this verse points to Christ so clearly, so distinctly, that many have found him by it, and have lived. Let me read it again: "For God so loved the world,

that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

**17, 18.** *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn, the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth, not is condemned already,*

Not, “shall be condemned at the last,” though that also is true; but “he that believeth not is condemned already,” —

**18.** *Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

May the Lord bless to us the reading of this very simple gospel chapter, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

### **JOHN 3:1-21**

**1, 2.** *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

When enquirers come to see any of you who are Christians, do not begin talking to them, but let them begin by telling you what they have to say, for it will probably guide you as to what you shall say to them in return. Our Lord Jesus could read all hearts, and he needed no one to tell him what was there, yet, for our sakes, he sets the example of letting Nicodemus speak first. This man was a Pharisee, and consequently was apt to attach too much importance to the outward part of religion, so observe how the Saviour deals with him by dwelling on the inner part of it,—upon the necessity of the new birth. He has less to say to him about believing, and more about experimental godliness, and the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart. Our main business, in dealing with men’s souls, is not to teach them what they want to know but what they really need to know, bringing forward ever that truth which, if it be not the most palatable, shall be the most profitable to them.

**3.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

“He has no idea of what it is; he cannot perceive it; he has not the faculty by which he could see or understand the meaning of the kingdom of God.”

*4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

His religion was external, you see; he could not grasp the spiritual idea which Christ had set before him. This matter of the new birth is very simple to all of us who know what Jesus meant, but it was exceedingly difficult to Nicodemus; as it has been to all but those who have experienced it.

*5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

The entrance into that kingdom is by a new birth in which water and the Spirit of God are both needful. There is a cleansing, and there is a new creation. There is the cleansing water of the merit of Christ, and there is the divine operation of the Spirit of God. Or, if the Saviour only means entrance into his visible kingdom, then it is through baptism that the man outwardly makes his profession of faith in Christ. It is through the Spirit of God alone, however, that he really enters into the kingdom of God. Note the distinction between seeing the kingdom and entering into it; no man can even see the kingdom of God, much less enter it, except by that new birth which is wrought only by the Holy Spirit.

*6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh;-*

No matter who the father is, nor who the mother is, there is no such thing as inherited godliness. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and nothing more; all that is born of the flesh cannot rise beyond its original source. However much the man may improve himself, our Saviour's words will still remain true, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh;” —

*6. And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

Everything is according to its birth, and according to its nature. The Spirit of God must, therefore, operate upon us, and we must have a new birth, if we are to see and to enter the kingdom of God.

*7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

“Do not wonder at this, for it must be so. The first birth, at its best, can only give you flesh; there must be another birth, a birth from above, to bring you into the realm of spirit that you may understand and share in spiritual things.”

**8.** *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

He is a mysterious personage, not to be understood by carnal man. You see his outward life, but you cannot see the hidden spring by which that life is moved and controlled, for that mysterious inner life is only discerned by those who possess it.

**9,10.** *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knoweth not these things?*

“Dost thou profess to teach others, and hast thou never been taught this first great spiritual truth?” Nicodemus was not the last Rabbi who did not understand what it is to be born again, and it is greatly to be feared that there are still many, who are teachers of others, who yet have never experienced this all-important change. The Lord have mercy upon them!

**11.** *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.*

The testimony of Christ, and of his apostles, and of all true disciples of Christ is this,—that there is such a thing as a new birth. Men may not believe that it is true; but, for all that, it is as certain as any other fact in the history of the world. It is foolish for any to deny it because they have not experienced it themselves. Although they have not experienced it, others have, and those who declare that they have been born again are as honest, as reasonable, and as trustworthy as any other people in the world. If any counsel had to prove his case, in a court of law, by the mouth of five or six witnesses, I am sure that he would not want better witnesses than those who declare that they have been born again. Many of them are well known people of high repute, and their testimony ought to be believed. But it is not a question of six, or a dozen, or a dozen thousand witnesses. There have been hundreds of thousands of men and women who have borne witness that a miraculous change has taken place in them, by which they have been born into a new

world, and have received a new life, and the testimony of these witnesses ought to be believed. It was hard that Christ should have to say, “Ye receive not our witness.”

**12.** *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*

For regeneration is, as it were, one of the commonplaces of the Christian religion. It is a thing that very often takes place among men; but if this foundation truth is not believed, how can men expect that yet higher truths shall be revealed to them?

**13.** *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

So far, this chapter speaks of the new birth, and there are many people who are much perplexed because they cannot comprehend this great mystery. They ask, “How, then, can we be saved? Is there no way of salvation without the new birth?” Assuredly there is none, yet the way of salvation is very simple and clear. It is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” and it is very significant that this chapter, which, beyond any other, teaches the doctrine of the new birth, with equal clearness teaches the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ. Listen: —

**14-18.** *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

That is the proof of his condemnation; he must be an enemy to God who will not believe on his Son. He who refuses to believe the witness of God is, by that very fact, convicted and condemned; and if he had no other sin, it is sin enough to sink him to the lowest hell to deny the veracity of God, to make God a liar by refusing to believe in Jesus Christ his Son. See, then, how these two truths are blended. “Ye must be born again,” and “he that believeth on him is not condemned.” Why is that? Because he is born again; that new

birth has taken place in him, and eternal life is his, because he has believed on the only begotten Son of God.

**19-21.** *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

Now, my friend, art thou willing to come to the light,-to the light of Scripture,-to the light of Revelation? If so, so far well. God grant us grace to feel that light is our friend, that we do not need to shun it, but desire to walk in it!

### **JOHN 3:1-21**

We can scarcely find a chapter in which the gospel lies so compact and so plainly stated.

**1.** *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:*

Christ's door is open at all hours. You may come to Christ by day. You may come to Christ by night. There is never a time when Christ is from home. He that seeketh findeth, and, to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. "The same came to Jesus by night." Perhaps he was timid. It is just as likely that he was prudent, and did not wish to commit himself till he had seen what it was that Jesus taught. Perhaps, too, he was busy, and had no time except at night. Better come at night than not come at all. "The same came to Jesus by night."

**2.** *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

The miracles were accepted as a proof of Christ's mission, and if they do not seem to be quite such a proof to us at this distance, they were a most marvelous and necessary proof at the first. Perhaps they have ceased because, that first work being done, the testimony can now stand upon its own strength, and men reading it may judge it to be of God if they will. But to Nicodemus it was quite clear that

Christ could not have worked his miracles, except God were with him.

**3.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Here is a greater miracle than I have wrought in the outside world. Here is a spiritual miracle. This is what you must receive as well as others. You cannot even understand my kingdom, and know what it means — you cannot see it, except you are born again.

**4.** *Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

Thus do men interpret Christ's figures literally, and this has been the basis of a great many mischiefs and false doctrines. When he is using metaphors to make the thing plain, they straightway use the metaphor rather as a cloak to hide the meaning than as a glass through which to see it. This is the reason why the doctrine of transubstantiation has come up. Because our Saviour said, "This is my body," men have not been able to understand that he meant, "This represents my body. This is a figure." Truly "the letter killeth." It is the inner spirit that gives life.

**5.** *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

He cannot be Christ's professed disciple except he receive the Spirit, and except he be baptized — if the water here relates to baptism at all, which we judge it does not. He must be renewed, and washed, and purified. That must be the water; and he must have the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, or else, as he cannot see, so he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

**6.** *That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

A man may have the best parents that ever lived, but all that is born of the flesh is flesh, at the very best. Your father may be a saint, and your mother a saint, but thou art born in sin, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and unless thou be born of the Spirit, thou canst not understand or see spiritual things, and thou canst not enter into the spiritual kingdom, for thou hast no spiritual

capacity. “The carnal mind discerneth not the things that are of God, for they are spiritual, and must be spiritually discerned.” Therefore we must be born again so as to receive that Spirit by which spiritual things are discerned and entered into.

**7, 8.** *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

There are mysteries in nature. There are mysteries in grace. Every now-born soul is a mystery, he cannot explain himself. He can scarcely understand himself.

**9, 10.** *Nicodemus answered, and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*

These simple things — these elementary principles — these rudiments of the school book of believers.

**11.** *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen: and ye receive not our witness.*

This was an additional hint to Nicodemus of the unbelief that still lingered in him. “Ye receive not our witness.”

**12.** *If I have told you earthly things,*

Things that have to do with men while here below.

**12.** *And ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*

If I lift the veil, and talk to you about greater mysteries still, if you do not believe about regeneration, where will you be if I begin to talk of any Godhead, and of all the inner secrets?

**13.** *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

A riddle, doubtless, to Nicodemus, which in after days he understood.

**14, 15.** *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Oh! that blessed “whosoever”! Hear it, ye sons of men, and tell it to your neighbors — “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

**16-18.** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned:*

He may be very faulty. His conscience may accuse him, but he is not condemned.

**18.** *But he that believeth not is condemned already,*

Hear that, “condemned already”; not in a state of probation. Never was there a greater mistake than to say that men are in a state of probation. That probation has passed long ago. They have been proved in the world, and, if they are unbelievers, they are condemned already. “Condemned already.”

**18-19.** *Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation,*

The condemnation — the head and front of it.

**19, 20.** *That light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.*

This is the secret of infidelity. This is the reason of all opposition to Christ. It is love of sin. Trace it home to its den and lair, and you shall find that it is love of sin that breeds hatred of Christ. Men do not see because they do not want to see. They do not want to see too much lest they should be uneasy in their present state of life. So they kick against Christ, and try to put out the light of his gospel, lest they be reproved by it.

**21.** *But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

God give us the heart that seeks the light, and sooner or later we shall find it. We shall find it in Christ.

### **JOHN 3:1-21**

Let us once more read together part of this blessed soul-saving chapter. I suppose that more souls have been saved through the reading of this chapter than through almost any other portion of Holy Writ.

**1, 2.** *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night,*

He could not have come at a better time; the business of the day was over, and all was quiet.

**2.** *And said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.*

It is always well to go as far as you can in your avowal of belief in Christ. Nicodemus confessed what he knew to be true, and he drew from it the thoroughly accurate conclusion that Christ must be a teacher come from God because of the miracles which he wrought. Dear hearer, if thou dost not yet fully know Christ, take heed that thou dost not trifle with the truth which thou dost know. If God has taught thee a little about him, prize that little, and thou shalt have more, as we have often said, "He that values moonlight shall yet have sunlight." Thank God if thou knowest as much as Nicodemus knew, and ask him to teach thee more.

**3, 4.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

Staggering at the symbol, he stumbled at the letter of Christ's saying, and did not perceive its inward sense.

**5, 6.** *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh;-*

Flesh, and nothing more; and it never can be anything more than flesh. The first birth brings no one any further than that. The children of the most godly parents, so far as their sinful nature is concerned, are in precisely the same condition as the offspring of the most ungodly. If they are ever to be numbered amongst the children of God, they must be born again, because "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" —

**6.** *And that which is born of the Spirit-*

And that alone —

**6.** *Is spirit.*

Now, the flesh cannot enter into the spiritual kingdom, only the spirit can enter that realm; and hence the need of a new birth, that this spirit may be created in us.

**7, 8.** *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

He is a mystery. The effect of the work of the Spirit upon him is seen in him, but no man understands what the Spirit of God is, or how he works, any more than he knows whence the wind comes, and whither it goes.

**9, 10.** *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*

A very similar query to that might be put to some who are living now “Are you profound philosophers, students deeply learned in classic lore, or wise concerning many of the mysteries of nature; yet know you not these things? What will be the good of all your knowledge if you do not know how to gain admission into the kingdom of heaven? It would be better for a man to be ignorant of all other things, and to know this one thing, than to have all possible human learning, and yet to miss this knowledge which is the most essential of all.

**11.** *Verily, verily, I say unto thee,*

Christ speaks with an authority that no mere human teacher can ever possess.

**11.** *We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.*

In a certain sense, every true minister of Christ and every true child of God, can say this, for we know that there is a spiritual kingdom. We have seen it, we have entered into it; and we can testify that there is another life which is as much superior to the ordinary life of men as the life of men is superior to that of the brutes that perish; and we know that we have that superior life. We have other eyes than these eyes that are visible, and other ears than the ears of our flesh. There is a higher and better life to be enjoyed even now, and he that believeth in Christ has that life. “We speak

that we do know and testify that we have seen;” and yet, though our testimony would be believed if we gave it concerning anything else, we are not believed when we witness concerning this higher and better life.

**12.** *If I have told you earthly things,-*

Things that take place here below, such as the new birth, —

**12.** *And ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*

Christ will not go on to teach us the deepest doctrines of the Christian faith if we will not learn that which is simplest. Shall the boy be taught the classics if he will not study the spelling-book? If men will not believe that there is such a thing as the new birth, shall they be taught the doctrine of union to Christ, and all those higher truths that rise out of it? They would not believe these things if they were taught them.

**13.** *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

There was a nut that Nicodemus could not crack, a riddle that he could not solve; and the Saviour left him thus puzzled, for the time being, that he might learn that, unless he was taught of the Spirit, he could not understand the teaching of Christ. You and I, who have been taught of the Spirit, understand the meaning of these words, but Nicodemus did not, though he was “a master of Israel.”

Now follows another passage of Scripture which I always rejoice to read in this chapter. There are two great truths revealed here; the one is, that we must be born again, and the other is, that whosoever believeth in Christ is saved. Sometimes those two truths seem to come into conflict with one another. A man says, “You say to me, ‘Only believe, and you shall be saved;’ and then, by-and-by, you tell me that I must be born again. Are both these statements true?” Yes, they are both true, and they are both in this chapter. We have been reading about the necessity of regeneration, now comes the glorious freeness of the gospel of Christ.

**14, 15** *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

You must be born into a new life if you are to be saved; how are you to have that great blessing? There is life for a look at Jesus Christ lifted up upon the cross, and lifted up in the preaching of the gospel. Look to him, then; and, as surely as those who were bitten by the serpents in the wilderness were healed the moment that they looked at the serpent of brass, so surely shall every son or daughter of Adam, who gives a faith-look at the crucified Saviour, be saved at once and for ever.

**16. 17.** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

There was no necessity for Christ to come here to condemn us, for we were condemned already by our sin. Why, then, did Jesus come? He must have come upon an errand of mercy, to bring salvation to the lost. It is even so; God sent him for that very purpose, that he might give eternal life to as many as believe on him. Oh, the glorious freeness of this precious gospel! Surely they deserve the deepest hell who will not have heaven upon such terms. They must forever perish if they reject life when it is set before them in this truly gracious manner.

**18, 19.** *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation,-*

The very first form of it, the proof of it, and the reason for it: "This is the condemnation," —

**19-21.** *That light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

Those who love their sins cannot at the same time love the Saviour; they must love the one, and hate the other; and it is a terrible choice when they deliberately reject the only Saviour; "the Light of the world," and choose the darkness of sin, the darkness of woe, the outer darkness, where there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

## JOHN 3:1-24

This is a very wonderful chapter, because, while it teaches the doctrine of regeneration, and the necessity of a great moral and spiritual change, it yet also reveals the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, — a very wonderful combination, which puzzles many who read what is here recorded. Many have been staggered by one or other of these great truths, yet they evidently agree together, for they are taught by the same unerring Teacher, and they are preserved to us by the Spirit of God in the same chapter.

**1, 2.** *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

Nicodemus was very candid; he went as far as he could go. If he had not yet learned to believe in Christ as his Saviour, he did at least admit that Christ, upon the evidence of his miracles, was “a teacher come from God.” There is always hope of a man who is willing to see all that he can, and who acknowledges what he can see. He will see “greater things than these” if he is willing to use his eyes.

**3.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*

Without a new birth, “he cannot see,” he cannot comprehend, he cannot understand, he cannot know anything about “the kingdom of God.”

**4.** *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?*

Ah, me! our blessed Master taught much by parables, and parabolic teaching is the best of teaching; but you see how readily it can be misunderstood, how men can take the emblem in a carnal way, and not understand its spiritual meaning. This is how the false doctrine of transubstantiation is taught. When Christ says of the bread, “This is my body,” the Romanists take his words literally, and so miss their spiritual meaning. It was in the same way that Nicodemus fell into error concerning Christ’s teaching.

**5.** *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

If the water here signifies baptism, — mark you, if it does, — then, observe, that there is no entering into the kingdom without it. I do not think that baptism is here intended at all, but the purifying influence of the Word of God symbolized by water. We might read the verse “Except a man be born of water, even of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” There is a great change of character necessary for entrance into the kingdom; seeing it is one thing, entering into it is another matter; yet one cannot even see the kingdom of God without being born again, or born from above.

**6, 7.** *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

Nicodemus was well born, no doubt; probably, he was a pure Jew; yet he must be born again. And you may have descended from a long line of saints, your parents may be in the Church of Christ, and your parents’ parents, too; but still the truth remains, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh,” at its very best. It cannot rise above that which gave it birth, it is but flesh. “Ye must be born again.” There is no hope for you apart from the new birth from above. You cannot see, and you cannot enter, the kingdom of God merely by your first birth. Birthright-membership is a great delusion, for “that which is born of the flesh is flesh;” and only “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

**8.** *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

It is a mystery. Thou canst never fully understand it, but thou canst enjoy it. If thou art born again, thou wilt know what it is; but thou canst no more discover thy second birth than thy first birth, except by its results and effects. May God give you to know what it is to be born again! There are many doctors of divinity and men of great learning who know nothing about this new birth, and there are many who are mere babes in Christ who nevertheless enjoy the fruit of this blessed regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

**9, 10.** *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*

These A B C truths, which are taught in the very first school-book used by Christ's scholars, — "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

**11.** *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.*

This is true of all faithful ministers of the gospel; we do not preach theories, we preach facts. We do not talk about speculations; we speak of a new birth through which we have ourselves passed. If there be no such thing, we are liars unto you; but there is such a thing, and this is our witness: "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." The fashion, nowadays, is to make statements upon religious matters with great caution, expecting to have them disputed; but we need exercise no caution when we state what we know to be true. We will be positive, we will utter our "verily, verily," when we speak what is a matter of fact to our own consciences: "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness."

**12.** *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*

Regeneration is a work that is wrought here on earth, and belongs to this present life. High as the mystery is, it lies but at the very threshold of the temple of divine truth: "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" No doubt, unbelief hides much of heavenly truth from us; but if we begin to doubt the very elementary doctrines of our holy faith, how shall the great Master take us on and up to the higher science that he is ready to teach us?

**13.** *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

This saying must have puzzled Nicodemus; he had, doubtless, read a great many riddles, but into the meaning of this riddle he could not enter; yet, beloved, any child of God, though he was converted only yesterday, may know what Jesus meant. Now observe that, as the first part of this chapter sets forth the need of a great and supernatural change, the latter part of the chapter shows us

the door of mercy wide open, and tells us that faith in Christ will save us.

**14, 15.** *And, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

There is no contradiction here to what we have been reading. He that believes in Christ receives the new birth, receives eternal life, and thus by faith, he gets that which is essential to a sight and entrance into the kingdom of God.

**16-18.** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned:*

What a charming sentence! What comfort it ought to bring to the mind of every sinner who will now believe in Christ!

**18.** *But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

“He that believeth not is condemned already.” If you have heard of Christ’s salvation, and you have not believed in him, that is evidence enough of your condemnation. There is no need to prove your evil works, no need to fetch your diary, and turn over the record of your life. If you have not believed in Jesus Christ, it shows a natural want of holiness, a lack of love to the loving God; and by that evidence you are condemned already, because you have not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

**19.** *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

The dislike of Christ is caused by a love of sin. If men did not hug their sins, they would embrace the Saviour.

**20, 21.** *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

If you do not like self-examination, be sure that you are wrong. If you do not like reading heart-searching books, or listening to a

faithful gospel ministry, be sure that you are wrong. If you do not like that part of the Word of God which judges you, and makes you tremble, be sure that you are wrong. The man in business, who cannot bear to look at his books, most probably has good reason to be afraid of his books. He shuts them up because they would shut him up if he were to pay attention to them. O sirs, there is no more damning sign of human's condition than his endeavor to avoid the light. Search and see, look and examine. Make sure work for eternity, whatever you trifle with, trifle not with your souls. Take other things on hearsay, if you please; but not your condition towards God. Let that be searched into with all earnestness and sincerity; and be not satisfied till the truth has satisfied you.

**22-24.** *After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison.*

We ought to be thankful that God's ministers are not silenced in this age. May the Lord raise up, in these evil days, many a John the Baptist, who shall faithfully declare his testimony concerning the Lamb of God!

### **JOHN 3:13-36**

**13.** *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that come down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

We are in the stairway now between heaven and earth; Christ has come down; Christ has gone up, and yet he was always there; a mystery, but one that is true, and new. Today we can go up by thought and prayer, and blessings can come down; and Christ is always there. "He is at the Father's side, the Man of Love, the Crucified."

**14, 15.** *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

What a glorious word! Here is the gospel in a verse, the whole Bible in a line or two. If we believe in him this morning, we have eternal life; not merely life, but life similar to the very life of God

himself — eternal life. We have in us that which will outlast the world, the sun, the moon, and the stars; we have a life which, being like the life of God, we shall live for ever and ever.

**16, 17.** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

Condemnation does come to the world through Christ, because the world rejects him; but that was no part of God's design in sending him. His design is salvation — salvation only. Oh! that we might so believe as to answer to the divine purpose in the sending of his Son. "He that believeth on him is not condemned," not even now, notwithstanding every sin he has committed, he is not condemned; "but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." Unbelieving is the condemning sin; it seals upon us the condemnation of every other sin. If thou dost not believe in Christ this morning, my hearer, thou art not in a state of probation, thou art condemned already; he that believes on him is not in a state of probation, he is not condemned, he is already acquitted, he is at this moment free from condemnation before the judgment-seat of God.

**19-21.** *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

You see why men do not come to Christ; they do not want to give up their sin; they do not want to be made uneasy in it; they are afraid of being reproved. You see why saintly men do come to Christ, for they take a delight in beholding him, and in having their faith and their grace made manifest, both to themselves and to onlookers.

**22-24.** *After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea: and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison.*

So he was busy until he was cast into prison. He would not waste an hour while he had an opportunity of doing good; he did it with all his heart. John! are you here in this sanctuary at this moment, not yet laid up, not yet obliged to keep your bed? Work while you can then; spend every moment in your Master's service.

**25.** *Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.*

Is it not a come-down — from reading about looking to Christ and loving, to a contention about purifying? There always are in the Church more or less idle quarrels about the dress of the preacher, about the mode of administering sacraments, and so on — a discussion about purifying.

**26.** *And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.*

"They are leaving you." They felt an envy on behalf of John, because his influence appeared to be declining. John was quite a stranger to this feeling; he loved to see his Master grow, even at the cost of his own effacing.

**27.** *John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given Him from heaven.*

No spiritual power, no power to bless his fellow-men, except it come from God. Shall I quarrel with God, therefore, if he gives to this man more power than he gives to me? Shall I dispute about it? It is God's sovereign will, and he does as he pleases.

**28, 29.** *Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.*

They were vexed, but John was joyful; he loved to hear of Jesus prospering.

**30.** *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

So he did. This is John's one song, last of his utterances almost. He preaches no more sermons that are recorded; he must now go to prison, and there lie in a silence which he could scarcely bear. It was very hard for John to be quiet; he had an active, noble mind, and he

became the victim, we fear, of doubts when he was shut up in prison. The breezy air of the wilderness suited him much better than the dull, heavy atmosphere of a prison. I daresay some of you may feel this at this time; do not set it down to spiritual results, to spiritual causes; set it down to the atmosphere, for so it is. We feel dull and heavy often, but heaviest when the heart is in a heavy air; every wind that rises blows away despair. So we must not think too much of our feelings, which even the wind can change.

**31.** *He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.*

However good a man may be, he is earthly; there is flesh and blood about him, akin to the earth; and even if he handles heavenly things, the earthiness of the preacher peeps out every now and then. Christ had nothing of that about him; he was above all.

**32.** *And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.*

Sad note! The news that all men went to Christ pleased John, but the fact that none received his testimony, comparatively none, grieved his heart.

**33, 34.** *He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

There is an infinite spiritual power about the words of Christ; they are the words of God, and the Holy Spirit concentrates all his energy in those words.

**35, 36.** *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

So John's last words are thunder; his dying speech has in it the word most terrible to all of you who believe not in Christ, "The wrath of God abideth on him."

### JOHN 3:14-17

**14, 15.** *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

“Whosoever.” Note that word, for it means you, and it means me. No matter though you are near to death’s door, crushed and broken, bruised and mangled, look to the Crucified One, and, looking, you shall find that there is life eternal for you. Though your soul has been ready to choose strangling rather than your life, yet there is a better life for you by trusting in Christ. Choose that, and rest in him. Say, from your heart, the last lines of the hymn we sang just now, —

“Jesus, to thy arms I fly;  
Save me, Lord, or else I die.”

**16, 17.** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

Now this, which is good teaching for those who have but lately come to Christ, or for those who are seeking to come to him, is the very same teaching which will bring comfort to the most advanced and best instructed of the saints. How I love continually to begin with Christ over again as I began at the first! They say, when a man is sick, that it is a good thing to take him to his native place, and when a true believer’s soul gets faint and unbelieving, let him breathe the air of Calvary over again. The learned Grotius, who had spent the most of his life in theological disputations, —not always or yet often on the right side, — when he was dying said, “Read me something;” and they read him the story of the publican and the Pharisee. He said, “And that poor publican I am; thank God, that publican I am. ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’” That was the word with which the great scholar entered into heaven, and that is the way in which you and I must come to God. May the Holy Spirit help us to come to him thus!

Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from JOB 7, AND JOHN 3:14-17.

## **JOHN 3:22-36**

**22-29** *After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea, and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bare me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am Sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bride groom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.*

“I have introduced the Bridegroom; and, henceforth, it will be my part gradually to disappear from the scene.”

**30.** *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

As fades the morning star when the sun himself arises, so was it the joy of the herald of Christ to lose himself in the supreme radiance of his Lord's appearing.

**31-34.** *He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit it by measure unto him.*

Did not the Holy Spirit descend, and remain upon him, and that without measure or limit?

**35, 36.** *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life:*

He has it now; and he can never lose it, or else it would not be everlasting. He has a life that must exist for ever and ever.

**36.** *And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life;*

He shall not even know what spiritual life is, he shall not be able to understand it, or to form any idea of it. While he is an unbeliever, he is blind to spiritual things. What a dreadful sentence that is I “He shall not see life;” —

**36.** *But the wrath of God abideth on him.*

God is ever angry with him because he has rejected his own GOD, and refused the great salvation.

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 3:1-12; JOHN 1:15-37; 3:22-36.

## **JOHN 4:1-29**

I have often read this chapter in your hearing, and you have often read it yourselves; but the Word of God is not like the grapes of an earthly vine, which when once trodden are exhausted. You may come to Holy Scripture again and again; it is like an ever-flowing fountain, the more you draw from it, the more you may draw.

**1-3.** *When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.*

Observe here that our Lord at first shunned conflict with the Pharisees. When he knew that they were jealous of him, he went away from Judaea to a more remote district, “into Galilee.” May he help us always to take that which may be the wiser course in every emergency! He was not guilty of cowardice; that, he could not be, for he was the bravest of the brave; and sometimes it will be most courageous on our part to shun a conflict. When you believe it is right to do so, never mind what anybody may say; but do as your Master did on this occasion.

**4.** *And he must needs go through Samaria.*

It is true that it was the nearest way, yet he might have gone round about; but he would not do so, for there were souls in Samaria who were to be blessed by his presence. He had a constraint upon him, an inward impulse, so that “He must needs go through Samaria.” Dear friends, whenever you feel the drawings of the Spirit in any particular direction do not resist them, but yield yourself entirely to his gracious influence, even as your Lord did.

**5. 6.** *Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.*

About twelve o'clock, in the middle of the day, at high noon. You will observe, dear friends, that our Lord spoke to Nicodemus at night, but when he was about to talk to a fallen woman alone, he did it in the middle of the day. There is a time for everything; so let those who serve God be careful as to the best time of their service. Our Lord had a tender delicacy about him which led him instinctively to do the right thing at the right time.

**7.** *There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water:*

That was not the usual time for drawing water; women generally went to the well in the morning and in the evening; but this poor fallen creature was not one with whom other women would associate, so she came alone, at the hour when the sun was hottest, and when nobody else would be likely to be there.

**7.** *Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.*

This was quite a natural way of beginning a conversation; and they will best touch other people's minds and hearts who do not harshly interject religion, but who wisely introduce it, leading up to it with a holy dexterousness such as our Lord always exhibited. He begins, not with any remarks about the woman's life, or her sin, or even about his great salvation, but with the simple request, "Give me to drink."

**8. 9.** *(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.*

But our Lord did not come to maintain these distinctions of race and caste. It is altogether foreign to the spirit of Christianity for nationalities to be despised. We sometimes hear people say of a person, "Oh, he is only So-and-so!" mentioning some nation that happens to be in the background. Christ was cosmopolitan, he loved men of every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people. To him, there was neither Jew nor Samaritan; all such distinctions were banished from his mind. The woman might well say what she did,

but her words would have sounded strangely out of place from the lips of Christ.

**10, 11.** *Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?*

Holy knowledge is very advantageous; it often is the means of breeding prayer: "If thou knewest .... thou wouldest have asked... , and he would have given." Therefore, beloved, let us teach the truth to all who come in our way, for it may be that we, too, shall meet with many of whom it can be said that, if they know what the gift of God is, they will ask for it; and if they ask for it, Christ will give it to them.

**12.** *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which have us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?*

Ah, she did not know how infinitely superior Jesus was to Jacob! There could be no comparison between the two. Jesus is the true Father of all Israel, and in that respect he is like to Jacob; but he is immeasurably greater than "father Jacob."

**13, 14.** *Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

Hence he will always be contented. He who has grace in his heart is a happy man; he grows more and more satisfied with the grace as it wells up increasingly in living power in his character and life. Oh, if you have never received that living water, may God give it to you just now! You shall never regret receiving it; but you shall rejoice over it evermore.

**15.** *The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

Up till now she has not imbibed a single idea from Christ. The Lord has spoken to her in parables, but she has not seen through the

thin veil, so she has missed his meaning. Now he fires another shot, and deals with her in another fashion.

**16-18.** *Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.*

It was needful to arouse this woman to a sense of her sinfulness. It was no use putting on plasters where there was no knowledge of a sore, and no use attempting to fill the void where there was no feeling of emptiness. So first she must be brought low, she must be made to see herself in the glass of truth, and then she would begin to understand her need of salvation.

Oftentimes, in seeking to bless people, the kindest way is not to build them up, but to pull them down; not to begin to encourage their hopes, but to let them see how hopeless their case is apart from sovereign grace.

**19.** *The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.*

She did not deny Christ's charges; she could not, for they were so accurately descriptive of her whole life.

**20-23** *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth:*

It is not the place which makes the true worship; it is the heart. It is not even the day; it is the state of a man's mind. It is not that the place is said to be holy, and therefore prayer is accepted; every place is equally holy where holy men worship God. All distinctions of buildings are heathenish; or, at the best, Jewish; they are done away with by Christ.

**23-26.** *-For the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is*

*called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.*

And she believed it, for what she had heard had prepared her mind for this declaration. Christ's reading of her heart had convinced her that he was the Messiah. How many have been brought to Christ's feet by having their characters laid bare in the preaching of the Word! The very thing they did in secret, ay, the very thought of their heart which they never communicated even to their best-beloved friend, has been told them. Their dream has been revealed to them, and the interpretation of it, too; and they have been convinced that he who can thus read their hearts must be the Son of God.

**27, 28.** *And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman; yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, —*

So that blessed interview was broken up by Christ's own disciples, What a set of blunderers we are! We sometimes come in between Christ and poor sinners whom he is going to bless. There is many a lover of stern doctrine, with an unsympathetic heart and a harsh tone of speech, who has intruded just when he was not wanted. If we cannot help poor souls, brothers and sisters, let us never hinder them. What Christian would not wish to help a poor sinner to her Saviour? Yet these disciples, unconscious of what they were doing, had by their very looks driven this poor woman from their Master; but she "went her way into the city," —

**28, 29.** *And saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?*

May we be made useful, even as this woman was, in bringing others to Christ's feet, for his dear name's sake! Amen.

## **JOHN 4:1-32**

**1-4.** *When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria.*

When he was wanted in so many places, he did not care to stay among the Pharisees where he was not wanted. They would not receive his message, so he quitted the lordly professors, and went to look after a fallen woman. Christ's estimates of usefulness are not always the same as ours. We think it a grand thing to be the means of converting a great man; Christ thinks it a worthy work to convert a great sinner.

*5. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.*

You remember how the patriarch said to his favourite son, "Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow." This was "the parcel of ground" which was near to Sychar.

*6. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well:*

What could the wearied Saviour do? Why, he could save a great sinner; and now that he is no more wearied, what can he not do? Brethren, when you go to preach or to teach, you like to feel fresh and vigorous; but do not think that this state is at all necessary. Your wearied Master won the woman at Samaria; so may you win souls, even in your weariness. Let us not make excuses for ourselves because we do not feel fit for our work.

God may bless us more when we feel weary than he does at any other time.

*6. And it was about the sixth hour.*

Twelve o'clock in the day, I suppose. Was that the time when the women usually came to draw water? No; but it was the time when a woman, who was shunned by other women, would be most likely to come; and the Saviour knew that. She had to take odd times to get to the well, for her neighbors did not care to be seen in the company of such a reprobate as she was, and she was probably just as anxious to avoid them.

*7, 8. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)*

Or, "food."

**9.** *Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria ? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.*

The woman seemed to say to the Saviour, “You Jews will not own us until you want something from us. Now that you happen to be thirsty, you do not mind asking for drink from me; but, at other times, you will have no dealings with us.” This was a tart reply to our Lord’s request, but he did not answer the woman in the tone she had adopted. When you are dealing with a soul, you must not lose your temper because of a sharp word, a hard saying, or even a blasphemous reply. Soul winners must be very tender and gentle; God make us so!

**10.** *Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

Oh, that ignorance, that baneful ignorance! “If thou knewest thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee.” Sometimes, my brethren, the key of a man’s salvation may lie in your instructing him in the simplest matters of the gospel, for, if he does but know, he will ask, and Christ will give. Great issues may depend upon this, which seems but the turning of a straw. Therefore, go and tell men the way of salvation; for, in the most of cases, ignorance, alas! bars the door. I mean not among those who have long heard the gospel, but I mean the outsiders who do not know anything about it. Tell it to them, and you may thereby open to them the kingdom of heaven.

**11-14.** *The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

So you see, my dear hearer, if you get grace from Christ, you really possess it, and it is of that nature that it remains in you, and becomes itself a spring within you, “springing up into everlasting

life.” It is not that temporary, trumpery salvation which some preach, which saves you for a quarter of a year, and then lets you perish; it is everlasting salvation. Once received, it does not pass away like that little dribbling shower that watered the pavement just now, and is gone, but it shall be in you a well of water, springing up, a living and enduring principle; or, to use another scriptural expression, “incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever.” This salvation is worth your having ; then, get it. It is worth your pining after, and praying for, and believing. Oh, that you might have it, even you! As soon as you trust the Lord Jesus Christ, it is yours, and yours for ever.

**15.** *The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

The woman had not even the faintest idea of the spiritual truth of which Christ had spoken to her. The fact is, conviction must come before conversion. No sinner is made alive till he is first killed. You cannot clothe him till he is naked. So now the Saviour began that conviction work in this woman; and he did it very wisely. He did not at first charge her with criminality, but he led her to accuse herself.

**16, 17.** *Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband.*

And, as she said it, no doubt she tried to look as innocent as possible; but a guilty flush stole over her face despite her attempt to keep it back.

**17.** *Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:*

Always give people credit for what is well said. If you want to win them, you must mind that you are not rough with them, but admit what you can of the truth in their utterance: “Thou hast well said, I have no husband.”

**18, 19.** *For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman said unto him, Sir, I Perceive that thou art a prophet.*

It would have been better if she had perceived that she was a sinner. Perhaps she did perceive it, but scarcely liked yet to confess it openly, so she said, “I-perceive that thou art a prophet.” Now she has a religious difficulty; and what man or woman is there in the

world, however far gone from morality, who has not some religious difficulties? And the more immoral they become, the more difficulties they are pretty sure to have. I hate that style of preaching which is everlastingly pandering to difficulties which never would exist except in a dissolute generation like the present. We preach a plain gospel; and when men's hearts are right, it is all plain to them. To him who desires to understand, difficulties soon cease to be a trouble. We had better deal with men's hearts and lives than try to answer their quibbling questions. This was the woman's dilemma,--

**20.** *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain;*

That is, Mount Gerizim,--

**20-23.** *And ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what. We know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

You see, brethren, all the difficulties that arise are but temporary. Put them away, and get to the great spiritual business that concerns us all, the seeking truly after God in spirit and in truth. If you really want to find God, you shall find him. He is already seeking you, and your very desire after him is the proof that he has already had dealings with you by his Spirit. Therefore, come unto him, and come at once, "for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

**24-27.** *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. And upon this came his disciples,--*

This gracious work of the Master had been done in private. Christ knew that such a person as this woman was not to be spoken to in the presence of his disciples, who were scarcely sympathetic enough for such service. But her heart is now won by the Messias; so, now you may come in, you disciples! Providence shut the door,

and kept them waiting a while until this delicate piece of work was done.

**27.** *And marvelled that he talked with the woman:*

These men who had themselves been picked off the dunghill marvelled that Christ spoke to this woman! So have I known some, who were themselves grievous sinners once, yet they have become horribly conceited some years after conversion, and they have thought that other great sinners might not be saved as they were. God deliver from such abominable pride any soul that professes to be saved! Every believer should feel, "If the Lord has saved me, he can save anybody;" and that state of mind ought to be ours always.

**27.** *Yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?*

They had some sense left, sense enough to keep silence.

**28.** *The woman then left her waterpot,-*

Possessed only with one thought, going to tell others the glad news she herself had believed, she "left her waterpot,"-

**28, 29.** *And went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did.- is not this the Christ?*

They must have been surprised to hear her talking about good things. There was no more likely messenger to win men, or to strike them with curiosity, than such a woman as this.

**30-32.** *Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*

So has every man who lives to win souls for Christ. There is a larder which he enters where the very delicacies of God are brought before him, and his soul is sustained and his strength is renewed by the dainties that the Lord has provided for those who do his will. Brethren and sisters, may we often feed upon this heavenly meat! Amen.

## **JOHN 4:1-34**

**1-4.** *When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though*

*Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria.*

And, surely, not only because it was the more convenient way, but because he had designs of love for some souls there that his Father had given him. There is many a needs be in divine providence because of the needs-be of divine grace.

**5, 6.** *Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.*

Wearied, and needing rest, yet there was no rest for him, except that he found his sweetest rest in winning immortal souls unto himself.

**7.** *There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.*

That is practically what Jesus still says to the sons and daughters of men: "Give me to drink." He asks for your love, for your trust, for your confidence. It is his meat and drink to bless your soul, and to give you the blessing that you need, and it is a refreshment to his spirit when you give him the opportunity of thus blessing you.

**8.** *(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)*

It was a great mercy that the disciples were out of the way just then; had they been there, they might have tried to keep this poor woman from speaking to the Saviour; and, sometimes, brethren, it may be well for us to be laid aside. God may do more good without our presence than with it; who can tell?

**9, 10.** *Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

See, then, the evil of spiritual ignorance, and see also how the chain of grace works, "If thou knewest . . . , thou wouldest have seeked . . . and he would have given." When God gives the

knowledge of Christ to the soul, then there comes the spirit of prayer, and then consequent blessing.

**11, 12.** *The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?*

She took the Saviour's figure literally; and there are still many who cannot see the spiritual meaning of God's Word, and run their heads against the hard stern letter which killeth, instead of seeking and finding the inner living spirit which giveth life. These are the people who build their hopes of salvation upon outward ordinances, and who impute saving power to "sacraments." Would God that they knew better!

**13-15.** *Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

She was still unable to see the inner meaning of the Saviour's words; the outward sense still held her fast. She needed to have her conscience aroused, for that would prove to be the way into her heart. Christ has different doors for entering into different people's souls. Into some, he enters by the understanding; into many, by the affections. To some, he comes by the way of fear; to another, by that of hope; and to this woman he came by way of her conscience.

**16-19.** *Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.*

Something had come home to her conscience through what the Saviour said to her, so she began to speak about what he was, not about what she herself was. This often happens when the preacher is enabled, by divine grace, to come home to the conscience. The result is, that the hearer says, "What a wonderful preacher he is!" But that will do no good, that is not the point at which we are

aiming. "The woman saith unto him, sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet," and off she goes, at a tangent, to enquire about various forms of religious observance. Evil liver as she was she was still a person who wished to be regarded as a religious woman; and it is strange how often a certain religiousness will flourish even in the most depraved heart, — not true godliness, however. So she propounded this difficulty to the Saviour: —

**20.** *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.*

"There are so many sects, can you tell me which is the right one?" That is the question which men often put to us when we begin to touch their consciences.

**21.** *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.*

This question is of very temporary interest. The hour cometh, when neither of these places, nor yet any other, shall be considered saved.

**22-24.** *Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

No longer is any consecrated building necessary to true worship; indeed, no building can be consecrated. No longer are we to be confined to canonical hours. No longer is God to be sought with the sensuousness of sweet music or of fragrant incense; but he is to be sought with the heart, and soul, and spirit.

**25, 26.** *The woman saith unto him. I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.*

This great truth burst upon her with all the force of a divine revelation, and faith came with the information. The words that had gone before had prepared her to expect this manifestation of Christ to her soul.

**27-34.** *And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or,*

*Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?*

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will, of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

### **JOHN 4:1-39**

*1-3. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.*

Our Saviour was not a man of strife; he was quite ready to contend with the Pharisees on fit occasions, but just then he avoided an encounter with them. Besides, one woman of Samaria, whom he was going to save, was worth more to him than ten thousand Pharisees who would not be saved by him. Most of the learning and culture of Palestine was possessed by the Pharisees, but Christ thought nothing of it in comparison with the soul of the one poor woman of Samaria whom he was going to save.

*4-7. And he must needs go through Samaria. Thene cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.*

“The sixth hour” means noonday, and that was a very unusual time for a Samaritan woman to go to draw water; but the reason why she went at that unusual hour was because she was one whom other women shunned so that, if she went to the well at all, she must go alone, for they would not be seen in her company. What a wonderful thing it is that this woman, who was not thought to be fit company for her fellow-creatures was nevertheless thought by Christ to be worth looking after and saving! But those who are the castaways of

men are often among those who are the sought-out and chosen ones of Christ.

**8.** *(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)*

This was quite a right thing for the disciples to do, for meat must be bought for men to eat. No doubt it is better to pray than to eat; but if one never ate, he would not long be able to pray. I have heard these disciples condemned for their worldliness and carnality, but I fail to see anything of the kind, it does seem to me necessary that somebody should go into the city to buy meat, and although it is not the noblest kind of work, yet, being necessary, it may be the stepping-stone to higher service.

**9, 10.** *Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God,*

How much we lose through ignorance! Ignorance is often like a great stone laid upon the well, so that the flocks cannot be watered, blessed is everyone who helps to roll away that stone. It is a great thing to know the gift of God: "If thou knewest the gift of God," —

**10.** *And who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

There are two things worth knowing, — what grace is, and who it is that gives it. Want of this knowledge often leads to lack of prayer, and lack of prayer leads to lack of receiving. Perhaps someone asks, "Why does not God give without prayer?" Because it is not his will to do so. His will is that we should pray about everything. Did you ever notice that, even when the harvest is ripe, it cannot be gathered in without prayer? Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Prayer seems indispensable; it is part of God's necessary machinery; he has pleased to make it so. But what condescension of love it is that the prayer of man should be necessary to effect the purposes of God! God even says to Christ himself, "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." So that, from the woman at the well up to the Lord Jesus himself, prayer seems to be the indispensable requisite of blessing.

**11.** *The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?*

You who reverence the majesty of Christ's Deity, the perfection of his humanity, the glory of his atoning sacrifice, the splendor of his resurrection power, you who know whence he has this living water, the power to save and to bless, worship and adore him with all your heart and soul.

**12-14.** *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: —*

You know that there are some who preach of a salvation that does not save; they teach that one may be a child of God today and a child of the devil tomorrow. That is like the water in Jacob's well: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." But Christ's salvation is of a very different kind: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst:" —

**14.** *But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

The grace of God is a living thing, a springing and abiding thing, an everlasting thing, and he that hath it in his heart hath that which hath saved him for ever.

**15.** *The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

Christ's words were coming true. He said that, if she had known, she would have asked; and, then, in her poor groping way, she began to pray, hardly knowing what she was asking for. I advise you also to pray even before you quite understand your own prayers, before you are sufficiently instructed to know what you really need. Ask God to give you what you need. Very often we make a discovery of our needs through having them supplied.

**16-19.** *Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that*

*saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.*

She perceived that there was something about him which marked him out as a prophet, so she seemed to say to him, “As thou art a prophet, solve me this riddle:” —

**20-24.** *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Let us never forget this. Even if we all believe it, we do not always act according to that belief. For instance, we sing through a hymn, but it might almost as well be an old song, for our hearts do not go with the words; or while our heads are bowed in prayer, mayhap our thoughts are back with our children, or our shops, or far away in some foreign land. Yet there is no benefit in coming up to a place of worship, or in listening to sermons and prayers, or joining in the singing of sacred songs unless our heart is there. Let us always recollect this, and sigh and cry rather than rejoice if we have been up to the holy assembly, and yet have not worshipped God “in spirit and in truth.”

**25, 26.** *The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.*

Now she had made the greatest of all discoveries, for the Messiah himself had come to her, and told her “all things.” This was her test of the Messiah, and Christ had answered it.

**27.** *And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?*

They had too much respect for him to ask such questions, except in their own hearts, but their Oriental prejudices made them marvel that he was talking with a woman!

**28-33.** *The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?*

They did not like to ask him plainly; although they were very curious about the matter, they scarcely dared to pry further into it, and his next words may have deepened the mystery still further.

**34, 35.** *Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.*

“Look at those Samaritans trooping out of the city, drawn by that woman’s testimony concerning me. They are coming, at her invitation, to learn more about the Christ.”

**36-38.** *And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.*

The prophets had spoken and written concerning the Messiah, their words had prepared the minds of the Jews, and also of the Samaritans, to receive the gospel, so the great success of the apostles must not be traced merely to their teaching, but also to the preparatory work of the other labourers who had gone before: “Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.” The Church is always ready to praise her reapers, let her not forget her sowers. There are some of us, who bring many souls to Christ, who are greatly indebted to the work which was done by other men who preceded us. There are some who, perhaps, have few conversions although they preach the gospel faithfully, they are sowing, and there shall come others, by-and-by, who shall reap bounteous harvests as the result of their sowing the good seed of the kingdom. No matter who sows, or who reaps, the glory of the harvest shall be unto the Most High.

**39.** *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.*

## **JOHN 4:1-42**

**1-3.** *When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.*

Our Lord knew that the Pharisees would assail him now that he was prospering, and gathering disciples. He, therefore, went away from them; as he did on other occasions. Whenever the cause of God grows, Satan is sure to be violent against it. Notice that our Saviour did not himself baptize his followers. Now, if baptism depended upon the character or the office of the baptizer, Jesus would certainly have done it; but to show us that the person baptizing does not impart any grace to the person baptized, our Lord baptized not, but left that work to his disciples.

**4.** *And he must needs go through Samaria.*

Men say that, “‘Must’ is for the king;” but our King puts himself under an imperative “must”, under a divine necessity. Though obliged to do nothing, yet he obliges himself to do deeds of mercy and grace.

**5, 6.** *Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there.*

Holy men often impart an interest to the very place, which they inhabit. We should not have cared anything about Sychar, or its well, if Jacob had not been there. Where godly men have been, the ground is sacred. How much more so where the God of men comes to visit us!

**6.** *Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.*

Only half a day spent on his journey, yet he is weary. See, brethren, how he was compassed with infirmity. Our Great High Priest so truly took our flesh, that he was wearied with his journey. He that rolls the stars along was weary in the middle of the day. So weary was he that he sat in the very attitude of weariness, as best he

could, on the curb of the well: “Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.”

*7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.*

Wonderful words of condescension! The Creator is asking drink of his creature. Perfect holiness is asking of a sinner, He, without whom there were no clouds, or rain, or springs, or wells, saith to a sinful woman, “Give me to drink.”

*8, 9. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.*

In effect, the woman said, “Now that you are thirsty, you can ask drink of me; but at another time, proud Jew that you are, you would not speak to a Samaritan.” Surely, this was rather a brusque answer, if not really rude. If she had known who it was to whom she was speaking, she would not have answered him thus.

*10. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

Something better than the water from Jacob’s well. Though thou hast denied him a simple draught of water, he would not have denied thee something infinitely better, namely, living water. She little knew what that living water was.

*11, 12. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?*

That last word, “cattle”, lets us see wherein the water of Jacob’s well could never be compared to the living water that Jesus gives. If beasts can partake of it, it is not that high and spiritual thing which immortal souls need, which Jesus came to give. Unwittingly, the woman had answered her own question, “Art thou greater than our father Jacob?”

*13, 14. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water*

*that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

If Christ gives you grace, it is eternal life that he gives you; it is not a life that can die; it is not a grace that you can lose. It is everlasting life; a supply of living water, which turns to a spring or well, and always remains within the heart that receives it.

**15.** *The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

She had caught the Lord's meaning so far as the perpetuity of the water was concerned, but still she did not know what the living water was. It was all a riddle to her, as I am afraid it is to some of you. There is many a Doctor of Divinity who cannot explain what the living water is.

**16.** *Jesus saith unto her,*

As she had apparently learned nothing by his instruction, he now tried another plan with her, and began to deal with her conscience.

**16, 17.** *Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:*

Praise people whenever you can. There was nothing good about this woman, but she had spoken the truth: "Thou hast well said, I have no husband." Our Lord purposely laid the emphasis on the last word.

**18.** *For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.*

What an exposure of the life she was living! Jesus laid bare what she and her companion in sin may have thought that no man knew: "He whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."

**19.** *The woman. saith unto him, Sir,*

She is getting more respectful now. When conscience begins to work, men treat the ministry with greater deference.

**19, 20.** *I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain:*

How pleased she was to get away from that unpleasant subject of her five husbands and the man who was not her husband! How

anxious people are to salve their consciences by discussing religious matters of a general character! When you come a little too close to them, they edge off if they can; so this woman said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain."

**20, 21.** *And ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman believe me,*

Our Saviour gave the woman good gospel advice, "Woman, believe me"

**21, 22.** *The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.*

They have the oracles of God. The Saviour comes of the Jews. They are right as far as they follow the instruction they have received; and you Samaritans are wrong in keeping to the law of Moses alone, and rejecting the rest of the Scriptures.

**23, 24.** *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*

All the true worship in the world is of God's seeking. None would ever worship him aright if he did not lead them to it. He seeks them, and then they seek him.

**25, 26.** *The woman saith unto him I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.*

Now were her eyes opened. That last word had made her see.

**27.** *And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman.*

How big they were, how wise in their own conceit, to be astonished that Christ was talking with a woman! The followers of Christ often get much too big for their places, and too big to please their Master, too. Though "they marvelled that he was speaking with a woman," as the Revised Version translates it,--

**27.** *Yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?*

They dared not do that; they had too much awe of him. But, do you know, I have often wished that they had done so? I should like

to have read what Christ would have said to them. How he would have reproved them for thinking that he had degraded himself by talking with a woman, or with anybody. Our Saviour would have vindicated woman's place in the world in a way that one might have liked to have heard.

**28.** *The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city,*

Why should she stop any longer? The faces of the disciples did not look pleasant; but their Master had comforted her. She would not stop to lose that comfort by hard words from the disciples: she "went her way into the city."

**28-42.** *And saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.*

Two days of Christ's personal ministry-what might not come of that?

**41, 42.** *And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

Would God that many might be brought to know that Christ, the Saviour,  
tonight! Amen.

## **JOHN 4:1-42**

*1-6. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.*

Do not be surprised, dear brethren, if you sometimes grow weary in the Lord's work. I trust that, even then, you will not be weary of it, but that you will believe that our blessed Master can still use even his tired servants, and bless their labours. The Lord Jesus Christ wrought great marvels even when he sat wearily on the brink of Jacob's well; and you, perhaps, are at this moment as fatigued and worn as you well can be; yet, will you not awaken all the energies of your soul if you should see an opportunity of doing good, even if it should be to some poor fallen woman, as in the case here mentioned? It is a blessed thing never to be too tired to pray, and never to be too tired to speak to an anxious enquirer.

*7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water:*

Providence was at work so that, when Christ reached the well, this woman was on her way thither. It was very late in the day for anyone to go to draw water; but, probably, the other women, who went to the well early in the morning, were not willing to associate with her, so she had to go by herself. Late as she was, however, she was all in good time, for she reached the spot just when Christ was waiting to bless her.

*7, 8. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)*

Or else they might have drawn water from the well to refresh him.

*9, 10. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and*

*who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

See the deadly mischief of ignorance concerning spiritual things. If she had known, she would have asked, and Christ would have given; but the first link was missing; and, hence, the rest of the chain was not drawn on. Sometimes, all that people need is a little wise instruction, and they will then trust the Saviour; God grant that we may ever be ready to give it! Alas! there are some who need much more than that; but Christ could truly say to this Samaritan woman, "If thou hadst known, thou wouldest have asked, and I would have given." O dear hearers, do not perish through ignorance! You have your Bibles; then, search them. You have a gospel ministry among you; take care that you give diligent heed to what you hear from the servants of the Lord.

**11.** *The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?*

Christ told the woman that he could give her living water, but it puzzled her to know how he could get at it. The well where they had met was deep, and he had nothing to draw the water out of it; how, then, could he go deeper still to get the living water of which he had spoken? She could not understand his simile, and to this day it is the same with many of our hearers. The simplest language of God's ministers goes right over the heads of the people; they take our words literally, when they ought to see that they are spiritual, and, on the other hand, I have known them spirit them away when they ought to be accepted literally. Such is the perversity of man's mind that, often, he will not understand the truth.

**12-14.** *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

These words set forth the wonderful nature of divine grace. They certainly greatly err who suppose that we can ever receive it, and yet, after all, be left to perish without it. Nay; but when it is once imparted to us, it continues to spring up within us, like a well that never runs dry. It is the living and incorruptible seed, "which liveth

and abideth for ever.” It is of the very nature and essence of the grace of God that it is indestructible, it cannot be taken away from the heart in which it has been implanted by the Holy Spirit.

**15.** *The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

This was an ignorant prayer on the part of the woman; but it is one which I would commend to every enlightened soul: “Sir, give me this water.” Do you want a form of prayer? Here is one for you: “Sir,” Lord,—“give me this water.” The Lord is ready to hear that petition, and to give this precious living water even now.

**16, 17.** *Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband.*

The Lord Jesus knew all about her character, and here he touched the weakest point in it. His plainest teaching had so far missed the mark, for he had not reached her conscience; but he was about to do so.

**17, 18.** *Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.*

You can imagine her astonishment — her blank amazement as the secret story of her life was thus repeated to her.

**19.** *The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.*

It would have been a sign of better things if she had said, “Lord, I perceive that I am a sinner;” but that confession had to be made a little farther on. How apt people are rather to think about the preacher than about themselves! If half the criticisms which are passed upon ministers of Christ were bestowed upon the hearers themselves, how much sooner they might receive the blessing they need! The woman then asked our Lord a question about religion which was strangely out of place from such a woman as she was. Yet, often, those who have least morality will have the most ceremonialism and concern about the externals of worship.

**20.** *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; —*

This Mount Gerizim; —

**20.** *And ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.*

This she thought was a very important matter.

**21.** *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.*

“There shall be an abolition of all specially-holy shrines, for all places shall be alike holy. There shall be a putting an end to all your traditions, and your forms of worship, for God shall be worshipped after another fashion than that which is merely formal and superficial.”

**22-26.** *Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.*

That majestic word of Christ carried conviction with it; the woman believed it there and then.

**27, 28.** *And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, —*

She was too glad, too happy, to recollect so poor a thing as a waterpot. It was much to her before, but very little now. As one who finds a precious pearl forgets some trifle that he carried in his hand, so she “left her waterpot,” —

**28, 29.** *And went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?*

Her notion was, that when Christ came, he would tell all things. Here was a man who revealed her innermost secrets; — was not he the Christ?

**30-32.** *Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*

O beloved, there is a wonderful fascination about the blessed work of soul-seeking! When one is really anxious to bring a sinner to the Saviour, eating and drinking are often forgotten. As the hunter of the chamois, in the heat of the chase, leaps from crag to crag, and is oblivious of danger, and forgets all about the time for his meals, so he that hunts after a precious soul, to win it for Christ, forgets everything else. He is altogether absorbed in this holy pursuit; the Master was more absorbed in it than any of us are ever likely to be.

**33-35.** *Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are but four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.*

That was probably an old Oriental proverb, used by lazy men who never thought it time to get to work; but Jesus said, "Do not use the idler's language any longer; now, at once, there is work for you to do."

**36-42.** *And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

The Lord bring us all to trust in him, for his dear name's sake!  
Amen.

## **JOHN 5:1-9**

**1-9.** *After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool,*

*which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.*

I hope to speak on these miracles in my discourse, so only briefly refer to them now; but this Sabbath afforded another memorable instance of our Lord's healing power. In the ninth chapter of John's Gospel you have the remarkable story of the man born blind. (See John 9:1-14)

This exposition consisted of readings from LUKE 4:33-36; 6:6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; JOHN 5:1-9; ND 9:1-14.

## **JOHN 5:1-23**

**1.** *After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

For he had respect to the Law. As long as the Law lasted, Christ observed it. Oh, that we were as careful to obey the rules of the Gospel as our Lord was to observe the ritual of the Law! Moreover, he went to Jerusalem because he had an opportunity of addressing great numbers of people there. While I have been resting at Menton, I have been very glad to be of service to a few friends who were either seeking the Saviour, or needing some guidance in their spiritual life; but I cannot tell you how happy I am to be once more in the Tabernacle, preaching to the great congregation. Fisherman like to cast their nets where there are plenty of fish; and fishers of men delight to be where there are many men who may be enclosed in the gospel net. "After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."

2. *Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.*

This pool of Bethesda was rightly called “the house of mercy”; but it might have just as truly named “the house of misery”: for its “five porches” were the abode of many who were in misery, and who needed mercy.

3. *In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk,*

Invalid persons, diseased, and scarcely able to move.

3. *Of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.*

What a sight for the Great Physician to look upon! The whole world must have been to him like one huge hospital, full of “impotent folk, blind, halt withered.” Wherever he went, he was surrounded by the sick, and sad, and suffering, those who were afflicted physically, mentally, and spiritually. But there was a special reason for the gathering together of so many sufferers at the pool of Bethesda.

4. *For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.*

It was the last remnant of miracle. Such things were common enough in Judaea in her better days; but now the times of the prophets had ceased, and the day of miracles was almost over. Here, at Bethesda, were just a few relics and remnants of the good old days. Only one was cured, he that stepped into the pool first after the angel had troubled the water. It was but a scanty power that was left to the troubled water; but it was quite enough, if only one in a thousand was healed, to bring a crowd of people to wait around the pool. If only one person in a year were saved, I should not wonder if you thronged the place to hear the gospel that saved him; but your privilege is much greater. Here all who come, if they will hear and believe, shall find healing. It is not the first only, but even unto the last who shall step into the pool, that shall be healed.

5. *And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.*

That was a great portion of the man’s life. If he was a full-grown man when he was attacked with the infirmity, he had now become old and gray. What a long time to be afflicted, thirty and eight years!

Have we not with us at this time some who have been afflicted with the soul-sickness of sin more than thirty and eight years?

**6.** *When Jesus saw him lie.*

The Great Physician fixed his eye on him, for his was an extraordinary case. Probably he was known and talked of as the man who had been paralyzed eight and thirty years. Note that it does not say, "When the man saw Jesus," but "when Jesus saw him." He did not know Jesus; possibly he had not even heard of his healing power and compassionate love. He was not seeking Jesus; but Jesus was seeking him. It was so with many of us;

and therefore we sing —

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed his precious blood."

When Jesus saw the impotent man, — And knew that he had been now a long time in that case, And a long time in that place, too, — He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? That must have seemed a strange question. What was he there for, if not to be made whole? But I will show you, by-and-by, that there was wisdom in the question of Jesus. It was no idle curiosity that moved him to enquire of the man whether he was willing to be made whole.

**7.** *The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming,*

Shuffling along, as best I may, to the water's edge, —

**7.** *Another steppeth down before me.*

Then, of course, the curative miracle is wrought, and the curative power of the water is gone until another season, when the angel troubles it again.

**8, 9.** *Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.*

This is our Sabbath. Oh, that we might have the same miracle wrought here tonight, upon many spiritually impotent folk!

**10, 11.** *The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed, He answered them,*

And he did answer them, too. It was a crushing answer.

**11.** *He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.*

That was his warrant. None but God could have made him whole. God can set aside any of his laws if he pleases; at any rate, whatever he commands, must be right.

**12.** *Then asked they him, What man is that which saith unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?*

They asked, "What man" had given this command. Why, if it had been a mere man who had said it, the impotent man could not either have taken up his bed, or have walked!

**13.** *And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.*

He never sought notoriety; but avoided popular demonstrations in his favor. The man who had been healed had exercised faith in Jesus, but he knew very little about him. A certain something in the air and mien of Christ had won his faith; but he did not know his name, or who he was. How small may be your knowledge, and yet you may be saved by true faith!

**14.** *Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

Probably, this man's illness had been caused by sin. Christ bids him henceforth keep clear of sin, lest a worse calamity should come upon him.

**15.** *The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.*

Full of joy, full of delight, he must tell out the name of him who had cured him, as grateful patients like to sound the praises of their physician when he has been the means of healing them.

**16.** *And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.*

This was a mere pretense, an idle excuse for their enmity. They not only hated Christ; but they must besmear him with their calumnies, and make him out to be an evil-doer although he was goodness itself.

**17.** *But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

The whole work of nature is continued on Sabbath-days as well as other days. Stars shine through the Sabbath-night, and the sun rises and sets on the Lord's-day as on all the days of the week. God's work continues. "My Father worketh," saith Christ, "and I work." "My work is my Father's work, and that goes on whatever the day may be."

**18.** *Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*

They did not understand him to preach Unitarianism; they understood him to proclaim his own true and proper Godhead, and he never contradicted them, for he was God.

**19.** *Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*

Christ's work runs parallel with that of the Father. The Father and the Son ever work in perfect harmony with one another.

**20-22.** *For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth; and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:*

The Son as well as the Father, is the Quickener of the dead. The Son is also the Judge of all men.

**23.** *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.*

As the universal Judge, the Lord Jesus is to be honoured by all men, "even as they honour the Father." Whatever others may do, or not do, we will honour the Father, we will honour the Son, and we will honour the Holy Spirit, three in one and one in three, the one God of Israel, for ever and ever.

## **JOHN 5:24-44**

**24.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, —*

If we truly believe the word of Christ, and trust in him who sent his Son into the world, we have at this moment everlasting life.

**24.** *And shalt not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

What a grand verse this is! It is worthy to be written in letters of gold at every street corner; would that we all knew the fullness of its meaning by heartfelt experience!

**25-30.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*

Christ as Mediator did the will of the Father, and yet also did his own will, for his will was always the same as his Father's.

**31.** *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.*

He did bear witness to himself by his miracles, but that was not the witness upon which he relied, nor was it the only witness to the truth of his mission.

**32-40.** *There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye*

*have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

They were great Bible-readers, great students of the letter, but they would not come to Christ; and hence the Scriptures themselves became a sepulcher in which they were entombed.

**41-44.** *I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?*

Some men find it difficult to believe in Christ because they are always seeking honour for themselves; desire for the praise of men often blinds the mind and prejudices the spirit. How boldly our great Master speaks! There is no flattery on his lips. He is the faithful and true Witness, the very Word of God. Oh, that all men would give heed to his message!

This exposition consisted of readings from GENESIS 45:9-28; AND JOHN 5:24-44.

## **JOHN 6:1-14**

**1-6.** *After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.*

That verse is worth thinking over. How often does Christ seem to ask us riddles, and place us in difficulties, so that we begin to say, "What will come of this? How shall we escape from this temptation; or how shall we stand under this trial?" He himself knows what he will do; and it is a very blessed thing when our faith being tried, it shows itself to be strong enough to leave the burden with him who can bear it, and to leave the difficulty with him who can meet it: "He himself knew what he would do."

7. *Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.*

That is our way. When our faith is little, we begin calculating the pennyworths that are wanted, and we make them out to be so much more than we possess or can possibly scrape together. That is not faith, it is reason, — poor, dim, shallow reason, which forgets the Infinite, and begins to calculate its own limited and insufficient forges.

**8-10.** *One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*

When Christ bids men sit down, he has a dainty carpet for them to sit upon: "There was much grass in the place." One might have thought that some of those people would have refused to sit down, for it is not everybody who will sit at a table that has nothing on it. But God knows how to move the hearts of men, and so these people. If they had not strong faith, yet had they faith enough to do as they were bidden. I wish that we all had as much faith as that.

**11.** *And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.*

"As much as they would." Note those words, for they are the rule at Christ's feasts. Of earthly things, he gives us as much as we need; and of heavenly things, as much as we would! "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." "According to your faith be it unto you."

**12, 13.** *When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.*

"Waste not, want not," Heavenly economy is to be practiced in the things of God. Christ is no niggard, but he is no waster.

**14.** *Then those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*

They were convinced through their stomachs. They came to this conviction merely through eating and drinking, and that faith which comes by the senses is no faith at all, or it is a sensual faith which cannot save the soul. These people, who came to this belief through eating, were very poor followers of Christ, as he said to them, “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 6:1-14; 30-45.

### **JOHN 6:1-21**

**1, 2.** *After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.*

Many of them curiosity-mongers wanting to see more wonders wrought, others of them sick themselves, and anxious to be healed. Wherever Jesus went, a throng went with him.

**3.** *And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.*

That was his frequent posture when his disciples were gathered around him. He sat at his ease, and talked to his hearers. He was not very demonstrative in his oratory, but spoke calmly and quietly, and left the truth to find its own way into the minds and hearts of men.

**4, 5.** *And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*

They were in a lonely place out in the wilderness, where the people had no means of obtaining food, and Jesus knew that they would soon be faint with hunger, so he consulted with Philip as to what was to be done. It is great kindness and condescension on our Lord's part to consult with his followers; he often did it, not that he needed their advice or help, but because they needed to be taught how to think and how to act for the good of others.

**6.** *And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.*

Observe the complex character of Christ; as man, he consulted with Philip; as God, he knows beforehand what he will do.

*7. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.*

Two hundred pennyworth must have seemed an enormous amount to poor Philip, for all Christ disciples had made themselves poor by following him. The bag that Judas carried probably scarcely ever had as much as that in it. If it were all spent, it would not go far towards feeding five thousand men, beside the women and children.

*8, 9. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?*

These small fishes were commonly cured and dried by that lake, little fish very much resembling sardines or anchovies, and they were eaten dry as a relish with bread. This lad had five barley cakes and a couple of these little fish, that was all.

*10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down,--*

Jesus would have everything done decently and in order. The people obeyed Christ's command, and sat down, we are told by Mark, "in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties." "There was much grass in the place." Our Lord has a carpet in his banqueting hall, such a carpet as Solomon in all his glory could not have made. "There was much grass in the place. So the men sat down,"-

*10, 11. In number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks,*

Among the Jews, it is always the master of the house who gives thanks. They do not call upon a child to say grace, but the father of the family, like a priest in his own house, stands up, and pronounces a blessing upon the food. It is a beautiful thought that Christ thus made himself, as it were the Father of that large family, the Head and Provider for those man; thousands of people.

*11. He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.*

"As much as they would." That is Christ's measure for those who gather at his table; it is only your own will that limits the amount of grace that you may have.

**12, 13.** *When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments, of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.*

I am sorry today that it is a mark of very poor people that they are often very wasteful people. These beggars, who had come only to be fed, were not satisfied to eat till they were satisfied, but they threw down pieces of bread, just as I frequently see, in the streets of London, great pieces of bread thrown away. It should not be so, for bread is the staff of life. Among the Egyptians, they are always peculiarly careful that never a portion of bread should be wasted, nor should it ever be as in a city like this where there are so many persons who are starving for lack of bread. But while I see the carelessness and wastefulness of the crowd, I also notice the carefulness and economy of Christ. He who could make food enough to feed the thousands at his will yet would not waste a crust. I think a large-hearted liberality should always be consistent with a strict economy. I have heard of one who called at a rich man's door to ask for a subscription, and he heard him scolding the servant for wasting a match." Ah!" he thought, "I shall get nothing out of him." Yet he received from that very man a larger subscription than from anybody else upon whom he called during that day. Christ would give anything but he wasted nothing; let us imitate his example.

**14.** *Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*

But the faith that comes by the way of the stomach is not worth much. If people are converted by loaves and fishes, bigger loaves and bigger fishes will make them go the other way; converts made thus are of small worth.

**15-17.** *When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.*

Then it was very dark. Ah, my dear friends, perhaps you know what it is to be in trouble, and to mourn an absent Lord. This is a

direful description of a specially dark night for the disciples: "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them."

**18, 19.** *And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.*

Do you wonder that they were filled with fear? It seemed so strange a sight, - a man walking on the waves of the sea.

**20.** *But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.*

Then they must have felt at ease at once as soon as they knew that it was Jesus who was walking towards them upon the water. Lord, if it be thou, fear would be foolish on our part; we are only too glad to have thy company.

**21.** *Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.*

No sooner was Jesus with them than they were where they wanted to be. The presence of Christ works wonders for us, we are soon at our haven when the Lord of heaven comes to us.

## **JOHN 6. 1-41**

**1-5.** *After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him,*

They had been hearing him all day, and he had withdrawn a little from them, but they pursued him up the hill, and I doubt not that as they toiled up the hill they showed their faintness and their weariness, which led the Saviour to see how much they needed refreshment.

**5-7.** *He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.*

Men's calculations concerning divine things generally terminate in a deficit. Two hundred pennyworth is not sufficient. But Christ's

calculations always terminate in a balance over, as we shall see. "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing may be lost." We, at our best, fall short of the mark. Our blessed Master not only does enough, but in his house there is bread enough and to spare.

**8-10.** *One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. —*

Or lie down, as it is, for they were accustomed to do that at feasts, and Christ would have them take their ease as well as enjoy their refreshment. "Make the men recline."

**10.** *Now there was much grass in the place.*

So it was a splendid dining-room. It was carpeted luxuriously. We learn from this that it was the Eastern spring time, for there is not much grass else; and there was therefore in Christ's banqueting hall the ceiling-was of blue, and the floor of green grass. What more could they want, except the meat?

**10-11.** *So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves:*

— Common, coarse loaves of barley, not much esteemed even then as food.

**11.** *And when he had given thanks,*

Though out of doors, and "in the rough," as we say, he did not forget that. I know some that fall to their meals, like so many swine, and have not as much grace as chickens, that are sure to lift their heads whenever they take a drink, as if to bless God for every drop they receive.

**11.** *He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down;*

— Or reclining.

**11.** *And likewise of the fishes as much as they would.*

That is one of the rules of Christ's feasting always — as much as they would. According to your appetite, according to your will, according to your faith, so be it unto you.

**12.** *When they were filled, —*

Had all they could desire.

**12.** *He said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*

Economy in the midst of bounty. However much we have, we are never warranted in wasting a single crumb. They had as much as they would, but they were not allowed to cast away the fragments.

**13-14.** *Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*

Men are often convinced by the argument of selfishness. They had been fed, and now they believed. But faith that depends upon a full stomach will despair when they get hungry again. Always beware of that religion which is in dependence upon loaves and fishes. You know how it was with the children of Israel.

“Now they believed the word,  
While rocks with rivers flow,  
Then with their sins they grieved the Lord,  
And he did bring them low.”

Oh, but we must not have a faith that depends upon what it can see, and upon what it can eat, and what it can drink. Oh, far the confidence in the blessed person of the Lord, and in the spiritual riches which he can communicate.

**15.** *When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, To make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.*

What, could ‘he not have used his kingship for the best of purposes? Might he not easily have routed the Romans, restored Israel to all her glory, conquered the Gentiles, and subdued the world, and set up a glorious church and state, with himself for the king, and himself at the head of the church? Ah, that has been the idol of a great many, and, like G will-o’-the-wisp, it has led many of the true people of God into bogs and sloughs, where they were likely to be lost. But our Master knew better than this, and was not to be tempted away from the true method by which his church is to be set up in the world. Therefore “:he departed again into a mountain himself, alone.”

**16-17.** *And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was dark, and Jesus was not come to them.*

That is a sentence that I should think some very gloomy people might hang upon, and about which they might groan in unison, "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them." Have you never been in that condition? Dark, dark, dark, as to circumstances, and as to feelings, and Jesus was not come to them. Now, something comes beside that.

**18.** *And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.*

Misfortunes never come alone. An absent Saviour, a roaring sea, and a bellowing wind. What will they do now?

**19.** *So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus—*

Here he is. Here is the first of their blessings. The first mischief is removed, and the rest will soon go. They see Jesus.

**19.** *Walking on the sea,*

Oh, what a sight! A grander sight than to see him on the land; and it is a more glorious sight to see Christ in the time of trouble than it is in the time of prosperity. He is always sweet, but he is more marvelous when they see Jesus walking on the sea.

**19.** *And drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.*

Afraid of their best friend — trembling at their deliverer.

**21.** *Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.*

The sea and the winds knew how not only to spare the vessel, but to carry it instantaneously to the place where they wished to be. But how often have you and I been rowing about, five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs, and we did not seem to be getting out of the storm at all; but the moment Christ has come, we have been where we wished to be. Oh, glory be to his name; there is no difficulty that you can be in, dear friends, but Christ can get you out of it in a moment, and bring you where you should be.

**22-24.** *The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone*

*away alone; (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:.) When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.*

Was not that a pleasant sight? So it seemed, but it was not. "Seeking for Jesus." That is a good description of a man — seeking for Jesus. Ay, but they were only seeking for more bread. They looked at Him as a bread-giver, and they were after him for that.

**25.** *And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?*

They could not understand how he could have got there. Jesus answered them, and did not answer them. Some of Christ's answers are evidently no answer at all. That is very often the best answer you can give.

**26.** *Jesus answered them and said,*

What, did he explain to them how 'he got there? No, he would not gratify their curiosity. He came not for that end. He therefore gave them a home stroke, and said: —

**26.** *verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me. not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*

You are loafers — loaf-hunters. You seek not me, but mine. It is not for the good that! can give your souls, but it is that you may have another meal, that you are here. Yours is cupboard love. You come after what you can get.

**27.** *Labour not for the meat which perished, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.*

Now, you quite understand what Jesus meant? Seek after that: which will feed your souls. Do not hunt so much after bread for the body. Yet the Saviour puts it very curiously. This is a double-shotted perplexity, a singular, curious kind of word. You are not to labour for that which you cannot get without labour, and you are to labour for that which you cannot get by labour. The Saviour liked to put things in that sententious way, so that they might remember what he said. If they misunderstood him it was their own fault, for it is plain enough. God grant us grace to practice the meaning of these

words. Why are ye so eager to get a bit of barley bread and a fish? Oh, that you were half as eager to come and get the bread which comes from heaven which will make a man live for ever, and which will be food to him as long as he lives.

**28, 29.** *Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, —*

The chief work, the greatest work which you can do.

**29.** *That ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

This is the point. You would like me to work miracles. You would be glad to have very wonderful, mysterious experience, but this is the thing you ought to seek after — the grandest, greatest thing that you can have, :’ that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

**30.** *They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?*

Are you not wonderfully struck with the patience of Jesus? These people had seen his miracles, and they had eaten loaves and fishes, and yet they say to him, “What sign showest thou, then, that we may see and believe thy work?” Oh, the matchless patience of the Lord, and the marvelous provocations of men.

**31.** *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat,*

Plainly hinted that they wanted more food.

**32-34.** *Then Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then they said unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*

Not understanding him, and praying still for bread, but not for grace.

**35-37.** *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

What a striking truth that was, with which to reply to them. You only come after me for bread, but you do not come after spiritual things. You do not believe in me. But, even if you do not, I shall not be disappointed, and my work will not fail. God has an election of grace, and that election shall be carried out. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." And then, as if to cheer them up again, he says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

**38-41.** *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.*

And there you see Christ has got no farther with them, but to leave them murmuring. And I believe that often the tame minister of God must expect to see no other result come of faithful testimony than for the people to murmur at him. But what if it be so? Will his Master blame him? No. No more than he blamed the Only Begotten. It trust be so that there may be a separation between the precious and the vile — that God's chosen may be drawn out; while such as believe not, shall be judged, and, in their own consciences, shall be condemned.

### **JOHN 6:14-40**

**14, 15.** *Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.*

Our Lord Jesus had just wrought the miracle of feeding the five thousand men with five loaves and two small fishes, so he was very popular at that time. The people even wanted to come and take him by force, and make him a king, but he escaped from them, for he knew the value of that popularity. What was it but a puff of wind?" Probably, many of the very people, who tried then to crown him

were among the crowds in Jerusalem who cried, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" And, nowadays there may be a great deal of anxiety to hear the gospel, yet very little result may follow from it. A crowded house of prayer is certainly a very hopeful sight, yet it may end in disappointment to those who are looking for souls to be won for the Saviour.

**16-26.** *And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea and drawing nigh unto the ship and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:;) When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*

How faithful and truthful the Master was! There was in him nothing of the politic concealment of his knowledge, and the endeavor to please everybody, which we see in so many. He speaks the truth whether it offends or pleases his hearers, and so should his servants do. "Ye seek me," said he, "not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

**27.** *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed.*

He rebuked their excessive ardor in seeking meat for their bodies, and urged them rather to seek food for their souls. But did

you ever notice what an extraordinary piece of advice our Saviour gave to these people?" It is one of his paradoxes. He bade them not to labour for the very thing which they could not get without labouring, and to labour for that which they never could get by labouring. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth:" yet how else can we have it?" But for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." It is a free gift, and not the reward of labour, yet Christ told them to labour for it. Did he not mean just this, Let not your greatest efforts be expended upon the things of time and sense, but let them go out after eternal and spiritual blessings.

**28.** *Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*

"What is the noblest work that we can do? What is that work which will please God most?"

**29.** *Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

The grandest work that any man can do is to believe on the Saviour whom God has sent. There are some who despise faith, but Christ was not of that number. He honoured it exceedingly when he said, in effect "This is the Godlike work, the work which is nearest to God's heart, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Dear friend, art thou struggling after that which is high and noble? Wouldst thou do the best day's work that was ever done in any mortal life? Thou run not to this or that invention of thine own, but be content to believe on him whom God hath sent. This is the first, the highest, the noblest work, the work which gives to God the greatest pleasure.

**30.** *They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?*

What strange questions for them to ask when he had amazed them with his wonderful works.

**31.** *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*

They talk about "bread" again, how they persist in coming back to that! You know the questions that men of the world are always

asking, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" This is the worldings' wretched trinity.

**32.** *Then Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven;*

Moses did not give Israel the manna, God gave it. And it did not from heaven; that is, from the celestial sphere, in the sense in which Christ, the true Bread, came from heaven.

**33.** *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from 'heaven', and giveth life unto the world.*

The Bread of God is Jesus Christ himself. The man who would feed so as to satisfy his spiritual nature, and live thereby, must feed upon Jesus Christ himself.

**34.** *Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*

They did not understand the meaning of their own prayer. Sometimes, in our services, when people are very quickly convinced of sin, and fall to praying on a sudden, a wise conductor ought to enquire carefully whether it is not a mistaken prayer. I do not doubt that many of the cries and many of the professions made in enquiry-rooms are mistaken ones after all, and that we put down as the results of our work much of which we shall have cause to be ashamed when it comes to the time of testing.

**35.** *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

Hear this, poor starving people; the wants of your soul can all be met by Jesus Christ. If you have him, the hunger of your spirit shall be appeased, and the thirst of your heart shall be quenched.

**36.** *But I said unto you. That ye also have seen me, and believe not.*

How the Saviour brings the truth home to these people, and he might do the same to some of you. You pray, "Give us this bread;" and he replies, "I have given it to you, yet you have not eaten it. You have seen me, you have heard me, you know me, and yet you do not believe on me." If Christ were to appear in this building at this moment, might he not say to many of you, "You have heard of me from your childhood, and you know all you need to know about

me, yet you have not believed in me”? Would God it were not so with so many of you!

**37-40.** *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

This is the glorious gospel of the blessed God, — that everyone, who looks to Christ with the eye of faith, hath everlasting life, and though his body may die, yet even for that there is everlasting life too, for Christ will raise him up again at the last day, Oh, that you would all believe on Jesus Christ and so find that life eternal!

### **JOHN 6:22-40**

**22-26.** *The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; (howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks) when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*

Mixed motives bring multitudes together. How true our Master was, how outspoken! He never tried to win a disciple by keeping back the truth; and often he spoke very plainly indeed, as on this occasion: “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”

**27.** *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.*

He seemed to say to them, “Do not come to me for bread and fish; I have given you that. Come for something better; come to me for spiritual food, food for your souls, food for eternity.” It is with that object that we should go to the house of God; not to listen to this preacher or that, but to hear the Word of God, that we may live thereby.

**28.** *Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*

“What are the best works that we can do? What are the most acceptable?” I wonder what they expected Christ to say. I am sure they did not look for the answer that they received.

**29.** *Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

The greatest, the best, the most acceptable work in all the world is that you come and trust Christ. This saves you; nothing else will do so: “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

**30, 31.** *They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*

See how they came round to the old subject again, bread to eat. The Lord Jesus Christ may point them to something higher and better; but their carnal minds always return to that congenial topic, something to eat. Their stomach was lord of their heart.

**32.** *Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.*

“That which will really feed you, and feed you for all eternity.” Moses could not give the people that bread; the Father only can give “the true bread from heaven.”

**33.** *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*

“The bread of God is he.” What a strange expression, yet what a true one! The bread of heaven is Christ himself. You must come and take him to yourself, and trust him for your salvation, and in that way feed upon him, or you can never have the heavenly bread which both gives life and sustains life.

**34-39.** *Then said they unto him, lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

See how the salvation of Christ reaches right to the end of all things. You and I may die; but though we lie a while in the grave, the salvation of Christ will preserve us, to raise us up again at the last day. There shall not be a bone nor a piece of a bone, of a true believer, left in the enemies' land.

All Israel and all that belongs to Israel, shall come out of this Egypt, through the blood of the Lamb; not a hoof shall be left behind.

**40.** *And this is the will of him that sent me that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

May all of us see the Son, and believe on him, that we may have everlasting life, and that he may raise us up at the last day, for his dear name's sake!

Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from Psalm 89:1-37, And JOHN 6:22-40.

## **JOHN 6:22-59**

**22-24.** *The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that the disciples were gone*

*away alone: (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:.) When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither the disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.*

Everything looked very favorable, did it not? These people put themselves to considerable trouble in order to get where the Saviour was; they were not satisfied to be away from him; they were “seeking for Jesus.”

**25, 26.** *And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*

He did not gratify their curiosity by telling them how or when he came there, for that was no concern of theirs. Neither is it the business of Christ’s preachers to spin ingenious theories about the gospel, or to tell pretty tales to amuse their hearers. Their business is to deal faithfully with men’s hearts and consciences as their Master did when he said to these people “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles.” They said that at first, no doubt. Christ’s miracles dazzled them so they sought him in order to see more miracles wrought by him. This was not the highest motive for seeking the Saviour, but they had found a still lower one; they were now following him because they “did eat of the loaves and were filled.” Yet the Master did not reveal them, and thus he teaches us that it is better to follow him from the lowest motive than not to follow him at all. Perhaps some of us have been too severe upon certain people. We have said that they come to our place of worship out of mere curiosity. What if they do? It is well that they come at all, so let us not cut even the spider’s web that links a man in any sense with Christ. That web may grow into a thread, that thread into a cord, that cord into a cable and there may yet be an unbreakable union between that man and Christ. That which begins in an inferior way may lead to something higher and better. Still, it is wise to let people know that they are not deceiving Christ, even though they deceive themselves as to their motive in seeking him. So he said to them, —

*27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.*

They laboured hard in order to get the bread that perisheth, so Christ made them devote their energies to a better object. This is a very extraordinary verse if we regard the letter of it, and not the spirit. Christ told these people not to labour for that which they could only get by labour: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth." Yet few men get their daily bread or meat without labouring for it. And then Christ told them to labour for that which nobody ever does get by labouring: "Labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." This is an instance of how the mere letter of the Word killeth. We must take the spirit of it, and then we understand that what the Saviour meant was this: "Do not be spending all your energies to get that which will melt away when you get it; but spend your time and strength in seeking after that which will last through all time, and be yours to all eternity."

*28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*

They wanted to do the greatest of all works; for, by "the works of God" they evidently meant the most important, the most sublime, the greatest of all works: "What shall we do in order to work such works as these?"

*29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

This is a wonderful statement, which is just as true now as when Christ uttered it in Capernaum. The greatest and best work that any of you can do is to believe on Jesus Christ; though, in another sense, this is not a work at all, but ceasing from your own works, and resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. But if any man would do that which is most acceptable to the thrice-holy God, let him believe on Jesus Christ whom God hath sent.

*30. They said therefore unto him, what sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?*

This was a shameful question to put to Christ when they had so recently been miraculously fed by him, and so had received the best sign of his divine power in the multiplication of the loaves and fishes.

**31-34.** *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, he gave them bread from Heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*

This would have been a good prayer if they had understood the meaning of the Saviour's words; but, as it was, it was a blind prayer. They did not know what Jesus meant when he spoke of the bread of God, which cometh down from heaven. They were thinking about the bread that perisheth, the bread for the body, so they prayed blindly when they said, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." Do you not think that many a prayer which children are taught in their childhood, and which men and women continue to pray for years, may be as blind a prayer as this one was? They know not what they ask, and the question very naturally arises as to whether it is a prayer at all.

**35.** *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."*

"I will take away his need by removing his hunger; I will take away his pain by removing his thirst."

**36.** *But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.*

See, then, how little there was of advantage in the mere sight of Christ. Many seem to think that it must have been much easier for people to believe in Christ if they had actually seen him, but it was not so. There were multitudes that saw him, and saw his miracles, and even ate the bread which came from his wonder-working hand, yet they believed not. Faith does not come in that way, for it does not come by sight, but sight comes by faith. Seeing is not believing, but believing often is seeing; it opens the eyes so that they are able to see what before was hidden from them.

**37.** *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;*

God's own elect shall surely come to Christ; they shall all believe in him, and be saved by him.

**37.** *And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

“Whoever he is that comes, I will never reject him. Whoever he may be that accepts me, and believes in me, he is mine, and I will never cast him away from me.”

**38-44.** *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*

“I did not expect that you would receive me; I did not imagine that you would believe me. You have not yet been drawn to me by the Father, so I knew that you would not come unto me.” But he who is drawn by the Father will come to Christ, and Christ tells us what will be his future lot: —

**44-46.** *And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.*

He corrects the notion into which they might have fallen that they could ever see the Father as he himself had seen him. Into that vision none of us can ever enter, for there is a peculiar divine relationship between Jesus and the Father which we cannot know.

**47.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, —*

Jesus uttered this great truth with very special emphasis: “Verily, verily, I say unto you,” —

**47.** *He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

That text is worthy to be printed in letters of gold, and then the letters would be far inferior to the message itself. If it be written on all your hearts by the Holy Spirit, you will not need any other

sermon than this divine text: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

**48-51.** *I am that bread of life. Your Fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

Here we have the doctrine of the great atoning sacrifice by which sin is put away, and that is not merely Christ incarnate, but Christ yielding up his life, dying in the room and place and stead of guilty sinners. That is the food, whereof, if any man eat, he shall live for ever.

**52.** *The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*

These Jews were still stumbling at the letter of Christ’s words; still in their blind carnality misunderstanding Christ.

**53 56.** *Then Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

Do not any of you interpret this teaching of Christ as the Jews did, after a carnal fashion, and fancy that we literally eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ when we come to the communion table. The Lord’s supper was not instituted at the time that our Saviour spoke these words, and he was speaking of quite another matter, the spiritual reception of Christ, the real and true feeding by faith with our spirit upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

**57-59.** *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught it in Capernaum.*

## JOHN 6:25-51

These people had crossed the Sea of Galilee, and gone to Capernaum, “seeking for Jesus.” It seemed a very hopeful sign that they should be willing to make such efforts to find Christ, but see how the Lord Jesus himself regarded it.

**25, 26.** *And when they had found him on other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek; me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*

What very plain talk this is! Our Lord does not try to gain popularity by the concealment of truth, but he tells these people to their faces, “You are only following me because of what you get out of me;” “Oh!” some worldly-wise man would have said, “that is a very imprudent speech; it will drive the people away.” Just so; and Christ seemed to say, on more than one occasion, “If people will be driven away by the truth. let them be driven away.” John the Baptist had declared that Christ; had his fan in his hand, and that he would thoroughly purge his floor; and if that floor is to be purged, there must be a driving away of the chaff Our Lord’s example should teach us to speak in his name nothing less and nothing more than the truth in all love and kindness. After thus pointing out the true motive which made the people seek him, our Saviour uttered a very singular paradox: —

**27.** *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.*

Is it not strange that Christ says, “Labour not for the very thing which you cannot get without labouring for it,” and then he says, “Labour for that which you cannot get by labouring for it”? He virtually tells us that it is so, by adding the words, “which the Son of man shall give unto you,” plainly proving that it does not come as the result of human labour, but as the free gift of the Son of God. He that is wise will spell out the meaning of the paradox; but he that is blind will stumble over the letter of it, and not discern the spiritual interpretation.

**28.** *Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*

“We want to do the best works, the noblest works, the most acceptable works in all the world; tell us what we should do in order to perform a Godlike work.”

**29.** *Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, “The highest and best work which you can accomplish is”*

**29.** *That ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

Faith is the noblest of the graces; it is the very essence of true worship; it contains within itself the germs of all excellence; and the man who believes in Christ has done that which is more pleasing to God than anything else in all the world.

**30, 31.** *They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from, heaven to eat.*

Do you see the drift of their talk? They are still looking after the loaves and fishes; and, therefore, whatever Christ may say, they turn the discourse round that way. If they can get from Christ something to eat, they will believe in him; what groveling, earth-bound creatures they were!

**32, 33.** *Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*

“The best and noblest bread,— the bread which has Deity in it, — the bread which can feed your souls, and sustain you with everlasting life, ‘the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.’”

**34.** *Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*

They said this, not knowing what they said, and not understanding what he meant. Bread for the body was all that they wanted; their cry was, “Give us bread, and we are content;” they had no spiritual appetite for Christ, “the bread of God.”

**35, 36.** *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.*

These were the very people whom he had fed on the other side of the sea; yet they were craving for more. That kind of bread cannot stay their hunger for long. They had not received him as their Saviour, else they would have been well content with him, and would have asked for nothing more.

**37-39.** *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which lie hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

Christ will not lose one whom the Father gave him, nay nor any part of one. He will not lose the body of any one of his people any more than he will lose the soul of one.

**40.** *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Christ will never have finished his work upon believers till he has raised their bodies from the grave, and glorified them like his own resurrection body. He will never cease from the work which he has commenced on any one of his people till he has laid the topstone in the glorious perfections of heaven; and this truth is: the joy of our hearts even now.

**41.** *The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.*

They muttered, murmured, whispered, growled amongst themselves at this saying of Christ.

**42.** *And they said, Is not this Jesus, the, son, of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?*

This is just the way with men, they judge by outward appearances; and if the gospel comes to them as a thing beloved of poor men, if it be preached with much eloquence, if the service be without; the attractions of sweet; music or of gaudy attire, straightway they say there can be nothing in it. O blind bats, when God veils himself in human flesh, can it be otherwise?

**43.** *Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.*

“I never thought you would believe in me; I never imagined that I should win your confidence.”

**44.** *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. —*

“You are not drawn unto me; therefore it is clear that you are not the subjects of divine grace. You think you are judging me, but in so doing you are really judging and condemning yourselves.” Whenever men sit in judgment on the gospel, they soon let us know what kind of spirit possesses them. It is not Christ who is on his trial, it is they themselves; and when they rail at him, they do but prove that the grace of the Father has never drawn them to him: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” —

**44-46.** *And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.*

“Do not suppose that, even when you are taught of God, you will know the Father as I know him, or see him as I have seen him.” That divine glance at, Deity is not for us.

**47.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

This was how our Lord spoke straight to the face of those who had derided him, and said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ?” With the strongest asseveration which he was in the habit of using, he says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

**48-51.** *I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh, down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

## **JOHN 6:30-45**

**30-32.** *They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.*

Jesus did not say to them, “I gave that bread to your fathers in the wilderness,” as he might truly have said. It was not Moses who fed their fathers in the wilderness, it was God who had fed them, and if they would but think, they would clearly see that it was so. But the Master took them on to another tack, and led their thoughts to a higher topic.

**33, 34.** *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*

Not knowing the meaning of their own request.

**35-39.** *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will —*

Many want to pry between the closed leaves of God’s secret purposes, to see what his will is. Now this is it: “This is the Father’s will” —

**39-44.** *Which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know! how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven; Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not*

*among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:*

Note how that doctrine of sovereign grace is used by Christ. He seems to wave it, like a lighted torch, in the faces of his adversaries, as if he said to them, "I did not expect you to understand me; I did not expect you to receive me. Do not think that you surprise me by your action. Imagine not that you frustrate my eternal purposes by rejecting me. I knew that you would not receive me; and that, as you are, you could not come to me, for 'no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.'" "

**44, 45.** *And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

May we so hear, and so learn of the Father, that we may come to Jesus Christ!

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 6:1-14; 30-45.

## **JOHN 6:41-65**

**41.** *The Jews then murmured at him, —*

That is, at the Christ, —

**41, 42.** *Because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?*

They did know his mother; but they made a mistake, which may have seemed a very slight one to them, when they said that they knew his father. Yet that is how nearly all great errors spring from some slight and apparently trivial addition to the truth. They did know Mary, but they did not know that Jehovah was the Father of the Christ.

**43, 44.** *Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves, No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day,*

Note the unflinching boldness of Christ. He did not say to these people, "Well, you have some cause for murmuring, and I will explain the matter to you." On the contrary, he faced them with the

doctrine of sovereign grace, and told them that he did not expect them to understand him, for they could not do so except the Father, who had sent him, should draw their hearts towards him.

**45.** *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

So, in street, he said to them, “You have not been taught of God; the Father has never drawn you, else would you have received me.” So does the brave Champion thrust the naked sword of truth into their very souls.

**46, 47.** *Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

Let me read those precious words again, catch at them, you timid and trembling ones: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath “ — now, in present possession, — “everlasting life.”

**48, 49.** *I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.*

He does not say, “Our fathers.” He comes out, as it were, as much from the Jews as from the Gentile ungodly world, and he says, “Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.”

**50, 51.** *This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat there, and not die. I am the living bread —*

Bread that contains life within itself, and is therefore most potent to sustain a life like itself: “I am the living bread” —

**51, 52.** *Which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*

I wonder if they perceived that this declaration of Christ involved his death, for he did not speak of giving them his living body, but his “flesh.” There are some who find their main comfort in the Incarnation of Christ; and,

certainly, that is a very comforting truth; but, without the death of Christ, it affords no nourishment for the soul. Atonement,

atonement, — there is the kernel of the whole matter. Christ must die, and then he can give us his flesh to eat.

**53, 54.** *Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

His soul shall live; his spirit shall never die; and though his body shall die, the force of the eternal life within the man shall quicken even his mortal body into an immortality like that of his spirit.

**55-60.** *For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?*

And a hard saying it really is until we are instructed of the Spirit of God to understand it. The Papist has made it into a gross and carnal saying, teaching men that they really, and actually, and corporeally, eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, which is horrible blasphemy, and nothing less. But they who are taught of God see the inward meaning of the truth peeping up from behind the letter, and know what it is to receive into their hearts, though not into their bodies, — into their thoughts, though not into their months, — the very body and blood of Christ.

**61-63.** *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; —*

The inward, Spiritual meaning gives life to the Word, and life to us also: “It is the spirit that quickeneth;” —

**63.** *The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

They are not carnal; they are not gross they have in them an inner sense which is full of life and spirit.

**64, 65.** *But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*

“No man “ — no, not even an apostle, — not the one who ate bread with Christ, and was his familiar friend, — not even he could come without being drawn by God. And he did not come to Christ; in the sense in which our Lord used the Word, Judas never really came to him, but perished in his sin. The Father must draw us with cords divine, or else to the Son we shall never come.

### **JOHN 6:41-66**

**41-44.** *The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Christ never retracted a truth or diminished its force because it was rejected, but he rather seemed to say, “You refused this truth. I knew you would. You need not murmur: you are none of mine. If you had been, the Father would have drawn you. You will not come. So are you set against truth that you cannot see it. So blind are your eyes that you do not behold it. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.”

**45.** *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

Beware, dear friends, of any learning Christ, except by divine teaching, for what we learn merely from the lips of our fellow-men will never be vitally learnt or really understood. We must be all taught of God; and so we shall be if, indeed, we be among these whom the Father draws towards Christ. All his teachings draw that way, and when they are taught into the inner man — not no much to the mind as to the soul and heart then do we know the truth indeed.

**46, 47.** *Not that any man hath seen the Father save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

One of the richest passages surely of all holy Scripture. It is all marrow and fatness, but here you seem to have the quintessence. We have eternal life if we are believers not shall have it, but have it now. We have a life which is eternal. It is idle to talk of our losing it, because it would not be eternal if we did. We have a life within us which can by no possibility ever die, but must live on for ever. “He that believeth on me though he hath many tremblings — though he may be the subject of many infirmities, yet he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” O my soul, exult in that glorious truth. Thou hast everlasting life as surely as thou hast faith in Christ.

**48** *I am that bread of life.*

The food on which that everlasting life lives — living bread for living souls.

O brethren, the dead letter is of no use to us. All the truth in the world, unto - “it be quickening, cannot feed our quickened natures. It in incarnate truth, even Christ that we must feed upon. “I am that bread of life.”

**49, 50** *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*

For that manna of theirs was corruptible. We read that it bred worms and stank, and though it was an angels’ food for a time, yet it was but temporary. It only fed a temporary life, and, like that life, it passed away. But Jesus Christ is incorruptible, and they that live on him live on incorruptible food, which nourishes the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever.

**51, 52.** *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*

They misunderstood the Master. They tarried in the letter, and did not reach to the spirit — the meaning, and that letter killed them, for “the letter killeth: the spirit giveth life.” The inward meaning is that on which the Soul feeds. And so the unhappy Humanist

believes that he can literally eat the flesh of Christ, which, if it were true, were monstrous and could be of no service to him. Of what value is one flesh more than another flesh, if it is carnally to be considered? He loses the inner meaning. Blessed are they who are drawn of the Father and taught of the Lord — who spy out what is, after all, so little concealed beneath the thin veil of the metaphor.

**53.** *Then Jesus said unto them,*

What? Do you think he explained it? No, he did not explain to these Jews. They were given up to judicial blindness. They had so long refused to see, that now they must not see, for on them was come the curse that, seeing they should not see, and hearing they should not perceive. Oh! how terrible this is when this falls on a man, and I think I know some upon whom it must have fallen. They have indulged the philosophical vein, always spiritualizing and cutting out the soul of truth, and they are given up to spiritualizing as many of the great German philosophers evidently have been, who cannot now receive a plain statement, however simple be the words, but, from their natural habit of continually twisting and tearing to pieces, they do so with everything; and a man may be an unbeliever so long that it will never be given to him to be a believer again. God grant we may never make scales for our own eyes, and so plug up the soul's mental vision with the miry clay of sin, that henceforth, even though the eternal Christ flash the divine truth into our eyes, we shall only be dazzled by it into a greater darkness. So it was with these men. Jesus did not explain to them. He just repeated the truth more emphatically, and made it more offensive to them than before. May a preacher sometimes be offensive in his preaching? He must be. He must sometimes feel that such a truth will only move men's wrath if he preach it. Nevertheless, we are not to put truth to the verdict of a jury; neither is truth to be submitted to what is called the "inner consciousness" of a set of sinners whose consciousness is all defiled. As well make a company of highwaymen a jury about theft, as make unconverted men to be a jury about what is truth. It cannot be. Christ does not condescend to that. He tells them the truth more fully and more offensively than before.

**53.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood,*

Which he had not said before, and was more startling still.

**53-57.** *Ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*

You see here three living persons — the living Father, and the living Son, and the living believer, and, truly, these three live one life, which comes from the Father by the Son into us, and we are made partakers of the divine nature, according to the apostle's wondrous language, "having escaped the Corruption which is in the world through lust." This is a great mystery which only he understands who feels it within himself.

**58-60.** *This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying: who can hear it.*

It was not merely the blinded Jews, but even his disciples who did not understand. Now, brethren, the test of a true disciple of Christ is that he is willing to believe what he does not understand. If you will only follow Christ's words as far as you can comprehend them, the spirit of discipleship is not in you. You are the disciple of your own understanding. Christ is not master, but your judgment is master. But he that submits himself to the words of Christ often finds it profitable not to understand. Say you so? How is that? It is profitable to feel that we have come to the end of our own understanding. I have no doubt that a wise father's talk is good to his children, even though the child does not as yet understand him. He will lay it up in his memory: he will understand one of these days, but the child — the true child heart — says, "I believe thee, father, though thou dost puzzle me. Thou hast given me a paradox which I cannot grasp, but I believe thee: thou art true." We do say that of Christ; and may we have evermore that spirit of a little child, without which we cannot receive the Kingdom of God. The other spirit is very rife in the world — the spirit that maketh man, virtually, his own teacher. And, truly, I wonder not at it, because there was originally so much of submission of the judgment to the

dictum of the church, or the dictum of the Pope, which is degrading, but to submit to Jesus and to his teaching — that is ennobling. May we have the same sacredly blind faith with regard to Christ which some have had to human authority, believing everything he speaks. But some of these disciples did not so.

**61-62.** *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

What will you say then?

**63.** *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

“You are not to take them as if they were flesh, and understand them carnally. They do but embody my words do but embody a living soul of meaning, which it will be for you to receive if you are indeed quickened, and then it will quicken you, and you will understand me, and live in me.”

**64.** *But there are some of you that believe not.*

And if they do not believe, then they miss the whole soul of the thing.

**64, 65.** *For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*

No, not even though he were an apostle — though he came so near to Christ as to pray to him and hear his secret and most private communications, and to see his singular and special miracles yet he would not understand, except the Father gave it as a special act of grace.

**66.** *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

Did he want them? I trow not He desired not to have around him a mass of chaff, but the pure winnowed corn. Consequently he used his own word as the winnowing fan. And I believe, brothers and sisters, that wherever Christ is faithfully preached, preaching is the best form of church discipline.

Somehow or other, carnal minds get weary of it, and they go away, and those that have not a longing and a love for the truth drop off of themselves; so they walk no more with him.

### **JOHN 6:41-71**

We shall read tonight part of that blessed sixth chapter of John's Gospel, beginning at the forty-first verse.

**41, 42.** *The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?*

Familiarity breeds contempt. Because the Jews knew Jesus and his kindred after the flesh, therefore they would not believe that he came down from heaven. Let us beware of foolish prejudices, and let us not judge after the flesh. Why should Jesus not have come down from heaven even though these men knew his reputed father and mother?

**43.** *Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.*

It was a muttering that was scarcely audible, but Jesus heard it, and he checked it. The Lord cannot take any delight in murmuring: "Murmur not among yourselves."

**44.** *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

You did not expect the Saviour to say just that, did you? He always speaks the truth, even though he has to lay the axe at the root of the tree of self-confidence. He does not seem to be encouraging his hearers, but rather to be repelling them. He was trying to show them the state in which they really were they had not been drawn to himself, they were alienated from him; and they would continue to be at a distance from him unless God should interpose, and draw them to him.

**45.** *It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

This was as much as to say, "The Father has never taught you. You have learned nothing from him, or you would come to me; but

in your rejection of me you prove that you are strangers to the grace of God.”

**46.** *Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.*

Christ is “of God” in a very peculiar sense. He is not God’s creature, but God’s Son He is of the very essence of God, and therefore he knows what God is as we never can know.

**47.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

This is a grand saying, can you not catch the truth it reveals? Whatever deficiencies there may be in you, if you believe on Christ, you have everlasting life, — not a life which you can lose, or which will die out, but everlasting life; and we are not among those who clip the wings of that great word “everlasting.” We take this verse to mean just what it says; that is, if you believe on Christ, you have within you a life which will last for ever and ever.

**48-50.** *I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*

Christ is the Bread for the soul, the Bread of immortality, the Bread which will fit a man for heaven, and sustain him till he arrives there. Oh, that we may all eat of this Bread of life, and so live for ever!

**51-54.** *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, Now can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

How necessary it is to have a spiritual understanding of the Scriptures! These metaphors have a sort of cannibal meaning about them to a man who goes no further than the letter, but the spiritual man knows that the soul feeds upon the doctrine of Christ’s incarnation, and drinks in the truth of Christ’s atonement. This is

feeding, this is drinking, this is being nourished upon Christ's flesh and Christ's blood.

**55.** *For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*

Meat and wine are, after all, only shadows; they feed the shadow-life of the flesh. Christ and his precious blood are the great realities, they nourish the true life of the spirit. Blessed are they who know what it is in spirit to feed upon these spiritual things!

**56-58.** *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.*

The Saviour goes over the same ground several times, there is a variety in his utterances, but in essence the meaning is the same. He wants to get it into our minds that we are to live upon him; — that He, not self, He, not works, He, not our feelings, is the real food of the soul, by which that soul acquires and retains immortal life.

**59, 60.** *These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?*

Preachers must not be astonished if they stagger their hearers when they proclaim the truth, they must not retract what they have said, nor tone it down, because so-and-so is offended by it. Truth is hard, especially to hard hearts. Every great truth is hard to a beginner in the school of Christ; but it is none the less to be taught, for that which is difficult today may become delightful tomorrow or whenever we are better educated in the things of God.

**61, 62.** *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

He that is offended at any gospel truth may expect to be still more offended, for there are higher and deeper doctrines than Jesus had then uttered. If you stagger under the elementary lessons, what will you do when you get into the grammar school of divinity, and begin to learn the loftier lessons of the truth of God? Oh, for a faith that never staggers when Christ speaks, and that believes whatever he reveals!

**63.** *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

Do not look at them as dead words regard them as full of life, and understand them in their living spiritual sense.

**64.** *But there are some of you that believe not.*

Some of Christ's own disciples, some who had kept him company, believer! not This was a very sad statement for Jesus to be obliged to make; but it must be made today about many professed Christians: "There are some of you that believe not."

**64.** *For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.*

He is not deceived by hypocrites; if we have crept into the church unworthily, he knows all about us, he knows us better than we know ourselves. Oh, that we might be very careful, watchful, jealous! May we abhor hypocrisy of every sort! It is impossible to continue in it without being detected; if it were possible we ought not to practice it; but with such an eye as that which is in the Head of the Church, even Christ, we cannot deceive; therefore, let us not attempt it.

**65, 66.** *And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

It often happens, in the ministry of a faithful preacher, that he has to say unpleasant things, and there are some who withdraw because of his preaching of the truth. Should he break his heart when they do so? Certainly not. They did the like with his Master, they acted the same with the apostle Paul. It will be so to the end of the chapter; and, indeed it is part of our work to separate between the precious and the vile. Truth is like the fan which drives away the chaff, and leaves the wheat the more pure. Yet it is sad to read that many of the disciples of Christ went back, and walked no more with him, because they could not endure the faithful words he spoke to them.

**67, 68.** *Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter —*

Who was always to the front, ever ready to speak, “Simon, Peter” —

**68-70.** *Answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?*

Our Lord often surprises us by the way in which he speaks; he does not say what we should have expected to hear from him, but he says something that is very startling, and even discouraging. It is the way of our Master, because he sees further than we do; and he often replies, not to the question as it lies in the words addressed to him, but to a belief in the heart at the back of the words. He did so here, Peter may have thought that “the twelve” were all steadfast and sincere, so Christ says to him, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?”

**71.** *He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.*

## **JOHN 6:41-71**

**41.** *The Jews then murmured at him, —*

That is, at our blessed Lord: “The Jews then murmured at him,”

**41, 42.** *Because he said, I am the bread which came down from heavens. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven!*

There are always some who complain that the gospel is “too commonplace, too well-known.” They already know all that is to be known about it, just as these people knew the mother and father of our Lord Jesus. How could he, who was the son of the carpenter, have come down from heaven? But this ought to have commended him to them that though he was divine, he became so truly human, and so perfectly took upon himself our nature as to be the son of Joseph, — one whose father and mother they knew; and ought we not to be glad of a gospel plain enough for a child to grasp, simple enough for the most ignorant to be saved by it? Let us not seek after

signs and mysteries, but graciously accept the gospel which the Lord himself gives us.

**43, 44.** *Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and will raise him up at the last day.*

This was high ground for Christ to take; it was as much as to say, “You need not murmur; I did not expect that you would believe in me. I know that human nature is such that, without a divine work upon the heart, man cannot come to me, and will not believe in me. I am not disappointed, or deceived, when you murmur among yourselves, ‘No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.’”;

**45.** *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

Nobody else will come to Christ; there is no real Christian in the world but is of God’s making. A Christian is a sacred thing, the Holy Ghost has made him so. It takes as much of God’s omnipotence to make a believer as to make a world; and only he that created the heavens and the earth can create even as much as a grain of true faith in the heart of man.

**46.** *Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.*

The Divine Son hath seen the Father; you and I are to believe, we cannot see as yet.

**47.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

He has it even now in possession; a life that can never die out is in the breast of every man who believes in Christ. Oh, what a joy is this!

**48.** *I am that bread of life.*

Jesus is that bread which feeds the spiritual life, and sustains the everlasting life.

**49, 50.** *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*

The bread that feeds the undying life is Christ Jesus himself, whom we do spiritually feed upon, and who is the nourishment of our souls.

**51.** *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

Christ — God incarnate — is the nourishment of faith, the spiritual food of the everlasting life. The new life which God puts into us is not natural, so as to be fed upon natural food, like bread and meat; but it is spiritual, and it must live upon spiritual food. That food is nothing less than Christ Jesus himself.

**52-56.** *The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

These Jews would not understand Christ when he spoke very plainly. He did not therefore retract a single word that he had said, but as the first light had dazzled them, — and willingly were they dazzled by it, — he turned the lantern full upon their faces, and made them blind, for the excessive light of the explanation was too much for them. It was not Christ's intent to save them; he was making the light itself to be blindness to them, because they had already refused him, and now the time was come when the heart of these people must be made yet more gross, that they should not see with their eyes, or hear with their ears. May the Lord never give us up to such a fate as that! It is a dreadful thing when the light of the gospel becomes the instrument of blinding men, and it does so still. After a certain degree of willful rejection of it, that which would have been a savor of life unto life can be turned into a savor of death unto death by men's closing their hearts against it. Yet I wonder and am astonished at our Lord and Master's course of proceeding, that here, when the men do not and will not see, he does but speak the truth the more boldly. Let no man think that Jesus was here alluding to the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine in the Lord's

supper; that ordinance was not instituted at that time, and there could be no allusion to what did not then exist. It is quite in another sense, in a high spiritual sense, that our mind feeds upon the flesh and blood of Christ. That is to say, the fact that God was made flesh, — the fact that Christ died for sin, — these are the food of our souls, and thereon our faith grows, and our spirit is strengthened.

**57, 58.** *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.*

This is spiritual feeding upon spiritual truth.

**59-62.** *These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

Let our Master teach us what he pleases, nothing ought to offend a disciple of Christ. It is ours to sit at his feet, and receive all his words without cavilling. But if we do not believe what he tells us upon some elementary points, what should we do if he were to reveal something more to us, and lead us into the higher and deeper doctrines of his Word?

**63.** *It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:*

That is to say, it is the meaning of Christ's words that gives life, not the words themselves; and if we stumble at the letter, and begin to ask, "How can we eat the flesh of Christ?" taking that expression literally, it will kill us. We need to get into the spirit of what he says, the true spiritual meaning of it, for that is where the life lies.

**63, 64.** *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not.*

Could that be truly said of any here? "There are some of you that believe not." If so, you know what becomes of unbelievers; you certainly cannot attain the blessings promised to faith. May God grant that, ere this day is quite over, there may not be left one among you that believes not!

**64-66.** *For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

So it seems that a man may be recognized as a disciple of Christ, and yet he may go back, and walk no more with him. Oh, that we may be real disciples — disciples indeed! Oh, that we may be part and parcel of Christ, true branches of the true Vine, living members of the living body of Christ!

**67.** *Then said Jesus unto the twelve,-The choice and pick of all his followers:*

“Then said Jesus unto the twelve,”—

**67, 68.** *Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter —*

Who was the ready tongue of the apostles: “Then Simon Peter”

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**68.** *Answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*

That was a very conclusive way of answering one question by another: “Will ye also go away?” “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” Brother, sister, if we wandered from Christ, where could we go? And how can we leave him when he has the words of eternal life?

**69-71.** *And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spoke of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon : for he it was that should betray him., being one of the twelve.*

## **JOHN 7:1-13**

**1-5.** *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If*

*thou do these things, show thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him.*

It is a very painful truth, that those who were the near relations of the Saviour were not believers in his divine mission; — at any rate, at first. He was truly a prophet who was without honour in his own country, and among his own kindred; and, on this occasion, they half taunted him concerning his claims. In effect, they said to him, “If indeed you are a prophet, get out into the world, and prove it. We hear that you profess to work miracles, then, why do you hide yourself away in this country place down here in Galilee? Begone to Jerusalem, and perform your wonders before the crowds in the capital;” — half hoping, perhaps, that his claims might prove to be true, yet not, at that time, at any rate, being themselves willing to become his disciples. See how perverse is the human heart. These men might even live in close companionship with Christ, and even be nearly related to him after the flesh, and yet not be converted to him. So the best of men need not wonder if they have unconverted relations, and we may not feel certain that there is any fault to be found in their example if others are not converted by it; for, certainly, there was no fault in the example of Christ, yet “neither did his brethren believe in him.” Mark, also, that no earthly relationship is of any avail in the kingdom of heaven: “for neither did his brethren believe in him.” So that, although I may be the child of godly parents, and one born of a long line of saints, yet I am, because of that, no nearer to the kingdom unless I become myself a believer in Christ. Remember what Peter said on the day of Pentecost; you have often heard that passage of Scripture half-quoted, let me quote the whole of it to you; “For the promise is unto you, and to your children.” If you stop there, you do not get the true sense of it. “The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Therefore, that text teaches that there is no distinction between the children of believers and any other children. We must be called by the grace of God like the far-off ones, or else we shall not inherit eternal life.

**6-8.** *Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto*

*this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ did everything, as it were, by the clock. His life was an orderly one; it was all arranged in the eternal purpose of God. The very day in which he should go up to Jerusalem was marked down, and he took care that he did not go before the right time. Now, half the power of: a Christian life depends upon its being timely. The bringing forth of fruit in due season is one of the marks of the tree planted by the rivers of water; and one of the signs of the Son of man, who delighted in the law of the Lord, was that he said, "My time is not yet full come." When it did come, then he went.

**9, 10.** *When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.*

Not with the great caravan that traveled, sometimes, with tens of thousands of people together going up to the feast, but with his own disciples in a quieter way.

**11-13.** *Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.*

Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews. There was a general fear of violence that would come upon any who professed themselves to be his followers.

Now turn to Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, the fifth chapter.

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 7:1-13; AND HEBREWS 5.

### **JOHN 7:14-53**

**14.** *Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.*

He was no coward, so he boldly showed himself in the midst of the throng in the temple.

**15.** *And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*

Or, "How knoweth he the Scriptures? How has he come to be an instructed man, having never learned of the Rabbis? He has never passed through our schools of learning, so what can he know?"

**16.** *Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.*

"I am not the inventor of what I say; I am but a messenger, delivering the message of him that sent me."

**17.** *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

Any man, who is seeking after that which is right, and labouring to do that which is right, is a good judge of the truth. A practical life of godliness makes a man a far better critic as to what truth is than all the learning of the schools can do.

**18.** *He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.*

If you ever hear a man speaking about the priesthood, meaning himself and his brethren; and about the Church, again meaning himself and his brethren; and about the sacraments, meaning certain performances by himself and his brethren; you may know at once that God did not send him. But he who speaks to the glory of God, and does not say, "Behold me; "but, "Behold the Lamb of God," he it is whom God has sent.

**19.** *Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?*

"Did not Moses say, 'Thou shalt not kill'? Then, you do not keep his law, though you profess such reverence for him, for, if you did, you would not go about to kill me."

**20, 21.** *The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.*

"I did it on the Sabbath day, and you are all stumbling at that."

**22, 23.** *Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye*

*angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?*

Surely, there was never a more triumphant answer than that.

**24, 25.** *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?*

Perhaps some of the same people who had asked Christ, “Who goeth about to kill thee?” now enquired, “Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?”

**26, 27.** *But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.*

They had a notion—perhaps derived from that passage in Isaiah, “who shall declare his generation?”—that the birth of Christ would be hidden in mystery. At any rate, there was some cloudy idea floating about that it would be concealed.

**28.** *Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am:*

“And yet you do not know me.”

**28-30.** *And I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.*

Something seemed to hold them back. Enraged as they were against him, a mysterious and mighty awe was upon them, so that they dared not touch him.

**31-33.** *And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them, —*

As they came to take him;—perhaps to the very officers sent by the Pharisees, Jesus said,—

**33.** *Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.*

“You may well let me alone now, for it will only be a little while, and then I shall be delivered into your hands, and you will no more be troubled with me.”

**34, 35.** *Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?*

That was always their fear. “Is he going to the Greeks? Will he be a teacher to them? Will he try to introduce them into the mysteries of our faith?”

**36, 37.** *What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come? In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried,—*

I think I see him standing up in the midst of the great throng. That congregation would soon be scattered, never to come together again; so he stood up in the most prominent place he could find, and, notwithstanding all their anger, and their desire to kill him, he cried,—

**37, 38.** *Saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly—*  
Or, “out of the very midst of him”

**38.** *Shall flow rivers of living water.*

What a glorious gospel sermon that was! It comes to us down through the ages, and is as true now as when Jesus spake it. Ho, thirsty ones, come ye to him, and drink; and he will slake your thirst, and create in you a well of living water which shall bubble up for ever and ever.

**39, 40.** *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.*

The Prophet about whom Moses spoke.

**41.** *Others said, This is the Christ.*

The Messiah.

**41, 42.** *But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?*

This was blessed testimony even out of the mouth of Christ's enemies. They objected against Christ what was indeed the fact, for he did come of the seed of David, and from the town of Bethlehem. There was he born; and though they called him the Nazarene,—and he refused not the title,—though over his head Pilate wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," yet is he the Son of David, and his birthplace was at Bethlehem, though some of them knew it not.

**43, 44.** *So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.*

He was immortal till his work was done. The hour for his death had not yet struck, and he must live on till the appointed time.

**45, 46.** *Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.*

The charm of his eloquence, the dignity of his person, his awe-inspiring demeanour, and a singular something,—they knew not what,—that Divinity that doth hedge about such a King as he was,—restrained their hands. They said, "Never man spake like this man."

**47.** *Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?*

"You sheriffs' officers are generally hard-hearted enough; are you also deceived?"

**48.** *Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?*

This was as much as to say, "If we have not believed on him,—we who are the great dons of the nation,—the rulers and the Pharisees,—why, then, there cannot be anything in his claims. Just as some people seem to think that, unless there is a lord in a Society, unless there is an honourable somebody or other in the chair, there is nothing in it.

**49.** *But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.*

They regarded the poor, common people as ignorant and accursed, whereas they, probably, knew as much about the law and the real spirit of it as these learned teachers did.

**50.** *Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)*

Being a member of the council,—

**51.** *Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*

He only asked a question, that was all; and, timid Christian, if you are placed where you cannot say much for Christ, if you have too great a fear upon you to vindicate your Master at any considerable length, yet say what you can; and, perhaps, the simple asking of a question may suffice to defend him. Nicodemus did but rise, and ask, “Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?”

**52.** *They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*

Which was a lie, for prophets had come out of Galilee. Still, they denied it; and they were indignant at having such a question put to them by Nicodemus.

**53.** *And every man went unto his own house.*

It was like a bombshell exploding in the midst of them; and often, a few brave words dropped into the midst of an assembly of bad men will explode among them, and scatter them hither and thither. Nicodemus had accomplished what, perhaps, he thought he should never do. He was indeed like his name on that occasion,—one of the conquering people,—for “every man went unto his own house.” Nicodemus had scattered them all by his startling question. May each of us as bravely witness for Christ as we have opportunity!

### **JOHN 7:30-53 AND 8:1**

**30, 31.** *Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?*

Well might they ask that question, for Jesus had wrought such marvellous miracles that they could not imagine anything greater. Surely this must be the Christ; or if he were not, when the Christ did come could he and would he do any greater miracles than this man had done?

**32.** *The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; —*

Whispered these things, afraid to speak out boldly because of the Pharisees, and therefore they quietly said it among themselves, and, after all, there is no fire more to be dreaded than a smouldering fire.

**32, 33.** *And the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.*

That was a blessed way for Christ to describe his return to the heavenly world: "I go unto him that sent me." Possibly he said this to the very men who were sent to take him.

**34.** *Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.*

No officers can arrest him now that he has gone up into his Father's glory; there is no fear of any of them being there to catch him in his speech, or to drag him before the ecclesiastical and secular judges, as they did when he was here;

**35, 36.** *Then said the Jews among themselves, "Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this; that he said, Ye shall seek me and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?"*

They appear to have had some intimation of that glorious love of Christ which was not to be confined within the bounds of the Jewish nation, yet they could not or would not understand his words.

**37.** *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried,*

—  
Shouted, spoke with all his might; and he stood, although he usually sat to deliver his message. But now, as if his whole being was roused to it utmost energy, on account of the last day of the gathering having come, when perhaps the people would go home, and he would be unable thus to speak with them again, "Jesus stood and cried," —

**37.** *Saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

O blessed invitation, how sweet it should be to every thirsty soul! "If any man" — prince or pauper, "any man" — moral or utterly debauched, "if any man thirst, let him come unto me," — not to ordinances, nor to human priests, "let him come unto me, and drink," as much as he will "without money, and without price."

**38.** *He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

He will not only drink enough to satisfy his own thirst, but he will himself become a fountain, streams of grace shall be communicated to his fellow-men through him.

**39.** *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

He was not given then; but later, on the day of Pentecost, he was given, and he has never been withdrawn.

**40-43.** *Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him.*

It is still true that Christ is a cause of division, as he himself foretold that he would be.

**44.** *And some of them would have taken him but no man laid hands on him.*

In the 30<sup>th</sup> verse of this chapter, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> verse of the next chapter, we are told why they did not take him: "His hour was not yet come." And, like their Lord, saints are immortal till their work is done.

**45-48.** *Then came the officers to the chief priest and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?*

They professed to be the spiritual leaders of the nation, and expected all to follow them.

**49-51.** *But the people who knoweth not the law are cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of those,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*

Nicodemus asked a simple question, but they could not answer it without convicting themselves of disobeying that very law of which they pretended to be the exponents.

**52, 53.** *They answered and said unto him Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house.*

**John 8:1.** *Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.*

## **JOHN 7:53; AND 8:1-11**

**7:53;** *And every man went unto his own house.*

**8:1** *Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.*

That is, as every man went to his own house to rest, so Jesus found rest in secret prayer on the Mount of Olives. There is a very striking contrast here; it is a pity to have brought the dividing saw right through the middle of such charming consecutive sentences.

**2.** *And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.*

That is always the posture in the East; the teachers sit, and the hearers stand. We may have to try that plan one of these days; it might be better for me, and also for you. There might be less drowsiness, perhaps, if the congregation had to stand to listen to the preacher's message.

**3, 4.** *And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.*

They did this only to entangle the Saviour,— not because they wanted to learn anything of him, or to do this woman any good, or even to vindicate morality; but it was simply an effort to entrap him.

**5, 6.** *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.*

They could accuse him either way. If he sanctioned their stoning the woman, they would charge him with violating the Roman law; but if he said that she should not be stoned, then they would say that he differed from Moses, and set aside the law of God.

**6, 7.** *But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let Him first cast a stone at her.*

That sentence must have flashed like a drawn sword, keen as a razor, through the very midst of them. Here were men who had probably been living in abominable sin, yet they had brought this poor sinful woman to Jesus, and laid this accusation against her.

**8.** *And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.*

After he had fired that one red-hot shot, he waited until it had produced its due effect.

**9.** *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*

They left her alone with Jesus in the midst of the place that the guilty crowd had forsaken in silent shame.

**10, 11.** *When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*

He condemned the sin, his own pure and holy life was the best condemnation of that; but, as for the sinner, he had not come to condemn, but to forgive. His own declaration was, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 7:53; AND 8:1-11.

## **JOHN 8:12-39**

**12, 13.** *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees —*

These wasps were always stinging him; when he drove them away once, they quickly returned to attack him again: "The Pharisees" —

**13-15.** *Therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them; Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I*

*came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.*

He did not come for that purpose the first time; he will come, a second time, to judge all mankind.

**16.** *And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.*

You see, brethren, how our Lord Jesus claimed to be God, for he put himself here in such a connection with God as would be quite inconsistent for any mere man. This is what Paul meant when he said that Christ “thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” he thought it ‘not a prize to be grasped, for it was already his.

**17, 18.** *It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.*

He did that by the miracles which Christ wrought; and they proved that he was indeed sent of God.

**19.** *Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.*

They thought they knew his reputed father Joseph; they thought they also knew all about Christ, the carpenter’s Son; but there is more in Christ, than carnal eyes can ever see. There is more in Christ than the most enlightened understanding, if it be but natural understanding, can ever perceive. These blind bats, the Pharisees, neither knew Christ nor the Father. If they had known him, they would have known the Father, for Christ is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.”

**20.** *These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.*

Like our Lord, every child of God is immortal till his work is done. This ought to divest us of every kind of fear. The enemy cannot lay hands upon a Christian until his Lord wills it: and when his hour has come, then it behoves not the child of God to resist the Father’s will.

**21.** *Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.*

Oh, what a terrible sentence is that! I pray that the Lord may never say that to any of us, “Whither I go, ye cannot come.” That would be the death — knell of all our hopes, and would make our life one long banishment. Blessed be his name, we who have sought him, and have found him, know that; we shall not die in our sins; and whither he has gone, we shall go also.

**22, 23.** *Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above:*

You are of a groveling nature; your thoughts rise out of the abyss where every evil dwells.

**23, 24.** *Ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore, of you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

If ye have no faith in Christ as the Son of God, “ye shall die in your sins.” What an awful thing it will be to die in your sins! What ceremonies for your eternal burial! What a robe of fire in which to lie down for your long sleep, and then to find no sleep because of it! “Ye shall die in your sins.” I should like this short, stern sentence to ring in the ears of every unbeliever. This is not my word, but Christ’s own word, — the word of the most loving and tender Saviour: “If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”

**25-29.** *Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith, unto them, Even the same that I said unto, you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me:*

This made Christ’s life so calm, so deeply joyous amid all its sorrow. “He that sent me is with me.” Servant of God, canst thou say the same? If so, it is thy joy, thy confidence thy strength. God grant that we may each one of us realize that blessed presence of our Lord!

**29.** *The Father hath not left me alone, ' for I do always those things that please him.*

Christ could truly say that. Oh, that it might be true of us, too!

**30, 31.** *As he spake these words, many believed on him, Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

“If you became my disciples because of what I said, will you believe what I shall yet say? Are you prepared to take in still further revelations, and to receive whatever I shall teach you? If so, ‘then are ye my disciples indeed’”

**32.** *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

Some who heard this message of our Lord caught at it; they were always on the watch for anything to cavil at and contradict, and therefore —

**33, 34.** *They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

Or, “the slave of sin.” There is the test of your position; if you do the devil’s dirty work, you are his servant. If you delight in sin then you can hear your fetters clank if the ears of your conscience are But open: “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.”

**35-37.** *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed;*

“I know what a boast you make of that.”

**37-39.** *But ye seek to kill me, because, my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.*

Jesus had admitted that, as a matter of temporal descent; but he denied it as a matter of real fact.

## **JOHN 8. 28-59**

**28.** *Then said Jesus unto them; —*

That is, to the Jews who were questioning and opposing him,-

**28.** *When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.*

Blessed be God, there were many, after the crucifixion of Christ, who did believe in him! Yet, alas! in others, the blindness of heart continued, and they would not see the Messiah in him who was crucified. We, who believe in the uplifted Saviour, can see the Father in the Son; and to us, faith has become a most blessed thing; and we know that he does nothing of himself, and that, as the Father has taught him, so he speaks.

**29.** *And he that sent me is with me:*

I commend that short sentence to all my Master's servants, for there is great comfort in it, Your Lord could say this, and so can you if you are truly employed in his service: "He that sent me is with me?"

**29.** *The Father hath not left me alone;*

There is another precious motto for you. Jesus could truly say, "The Father hath not left me alone;" and, as he did not leave his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, so he will not leave any of his sons.

**29.** *For I do always those things that please him.*

Let us labour earnestly to be able to say that. If there is anything which would not please God, let us have nothing to do with it; if it would not please God, it ought not to please us. Blessed shall that servant of the Lord be, who can sincerely say, "I do always those things that please him."

**30-32.** *As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

There is such a thing as a temporary faith; beware of it, I beseech you. Men appear to believe in Christ for a little while, like that seed which was sown upon the rock, which speedily sprang up, and just as quickly withered away. God-given faith is not temporary, but permanent: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." God gives us the faith which is able to endure the fire of persecution, and which continues steadfast even when exposed to

the evil example of an ungodly world. “He that endureth to the end shall be saved;” but temporary faith brings only delusion, and ends in destruction.

**33, 34.** *They answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

Depend upon it, acts of sin breed habits of sin; and habits are the chains which slaves wear. How many there are who are bound to their lusts with many fetters! Once, they seemed to enjoy the sin, and to hold it in subjection; but now it has bound them, and they cannot escape from it.

**35, 36.** *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

If he sets you free from sin, you will never go back to its slavery again. There is no emancipation like that which Jesus brings, for it is eternal; when he snaps the fetter, he sets the believer free for ever.

**37, 38.** *I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.*

It is a common characteristic of children to tell what they see; what they witness at home, they are sure to tell abroad. If you are a child of God, you will act and speak like your Father does; and if you are a child of the devil, you will act and speak like him. Our parentage may be discovered by our acts and our words: “I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.”

**39.** *They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.*

“That is, if you were the true spiritual children of faithful Abraham, you would act as he did.”

**40-42.** *But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication;*

*we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*

If any man has a right idea of God, and really loves God, if he will study the character of Christ, he will see that Christ is the very image of God in human flesh, and he will fall in love with Christ. That result is inevitable. Men form wrong ideas of God; and then, when they read the life of Christ,

they see no likeness between the Christ and their conception of God; nor is there any. But if they would take their idea of God from God's own Word, then they would see that, in the person of the Man of Nazareth, the Divine character truly shines out, but it is toned down so as to meet the human eye without the excessive glare that would blind it. But it is the same Light of Light, the same Love of Love, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, "for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," he is the express image of God, and he who truly knows God will know that Christ also is God, for Father and Son are one.

**43-47.** *Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin! And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.*

What a wonderful character was the character of Christ! We get a strange light cast upon it as we read this dialogue in which he endured such contradiction of sinners against himself. My brethren, in Christ there is all the tenderness of a woman; but do not think that he is effeminate, far from it. What masculine force, what vigor what power, there is in him! There are some people who, if we speak plainly against error, tell us that we are uncharitable, and that we have not the spirit of Christ. Is it so? Did there ever fall from any lips more burning words than those which we find here, when he is brought into conflict with his foes? The fact is, he is meek and lowly, but he is most courageous; he is genial and kind, but he is

honest and true. He speaks with suavity and gentleness; but, at the same time, there is great force about every expression that he uses. He does not mince matters when he is dealing with sin. There is no velvet on his lips; he utters no honeyed phrases. Naked truth flashes, like a scimitar from its scabbard, when he has to deal with those who oppose the truth. "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

**48.** *Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?*

You know this form of answer; it is an old trick, when there is no case, abuse the plaintiff. So, when there is no answer to what Christ has said, call him a Samaritan, and say that he has a devil.

**49-51.** *Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

What glorious gospel brilliance Christ suddenly flashes upon these men! He promises even to them that, if they will keep his saying, they shall live for ever, they shall be partakers of an eternal, unquenchable life. It might have seemed to us to be like casting pearls before swine to proclaim that great truth to such hearers; but our Master's infinite wisdom does not permit us to think so.

**52-56.** *Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: yet ye have not known him, but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.*

He will not answer their questions, for they do not ask that they may learn. They ask that they may cavil; so he multiplies his riddles. He lets the light blind them yet more, Now he speaks, not so much

of the undying life of believers, as of his own eternal existence, long before the prophets and Abraham of whom they had spoken.

**57, 58.** *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

Before there was any Abraham, there was this glorious Christ of ours existing as the Eternal I AM, in all the infinity of his glory. Now comes a thoroughly characteristic Jewish answer, —

**59.** *Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them. and so passed by.*

They believed that he claimed to be God, as he certainly did, and therefore they tried to stone him; and there is no foothold for those who say that Christ was a very good man, but only a man. If he was not the Son of God, he was not a good man, for no good man would have left upon his followers, and upon his foes, too, the impression that he claimed to be God, if he was not; and no good man could have claimed to be God if he was not really so. Rank him either amongst the grossest of impostors, or else as the Son of God, — one or the other. There is no halting-piece between the two. Blessed be thy name, O Son of Mary, thou art also the Son of the Highest, and as such we worship and adore thee!

## **JOHN 8:29-59**

Christ thus spake to his adversaries.

**29.** *And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone: for I do always those things that please him.*

Brethren, what Christ could say, I trust many of his servants can also say in a like manner. “He that sent me is with me.” What power, what pleasure, must the presence of God give to his servants! “The Father hath not left me alone.” Oh! how blessed to feel that behind us is the sound of our Master’s feet, and that in us is the temple of his presence! We cannot, however, say, as Christ did, “I do always those things that please him,” for, alas! we have the remembrance of sin this morning, and have to confess it in his sight. But let us also remember that he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

**30, 31.** *As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

It is not a mere profession that makes a man a saint; there must be a continuance of well-doing. We bind lads apprentice for a little time, but no man belongs to Christ unless he belongeth to him for ever. There must be an entire giving up of one's self, in life and unto death, to the Lord's cause.

**32-34.** *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

There is this in the original, "Whosoever maketh sin." It is not exactly, "Whosoever committeth it," because if so, all would be the servants of sin, and God would have no sons at all. But it says in the original "Whosoever maketh sin," that is, whosoever makes it his choice, and makes it the delight of his soul, whosoever doth this is the servant of sin, and is no son of God.

**35.** *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.*

He may be in the house, and have slender privileges for a time, but these soon go away.

**36.** *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

And give you the privileges of sons.

**37. 38.** *I know that ye are Abraham's seed, but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.*

Men always act according to their natures. We shall find the polluted fountain sending forth filthy streams. We do not expect to hear sweet singing from a serpent, nor, on the other hand, do we expect hissing from the bird, but every creature is after its own kind. Christ, coming from the Father, reveals God: ungodly men, coming from the devil, reveal the devil.

**39-42.** *They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham but now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him. We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*

You would see in me a brother; you would perceive in me the attributes of God, and, being made like unto God as his sons, would love the God-head in me.

**43-44.** *Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.*

Christ doth not speak very gentle words at all times. A deeply-rooted disease needs a sharp medicine, and he gives it. He uses the knife sometimes, and if there be a deadly ulcer that must be cut away, he knoweth how to do it with all the sternness of which his loving heart is capable.

**44.** *He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there was no truth in him.*

The first murder was committed by his suggestion. Cain was guilty of it, but Satan instigated it. He hath ever been a man-killer, and so Christ says that inasmuch as they sought to kill him, they were worthy sons of their parent. "There is no truth in him."

**44.** *When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own:*

It is his own idiom. You may always know him by it.

**44.** *For he is a liar, and the father of it.*

The father of all liars, and of all lies.

**45-46.** *And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?*

Oh! matchless argument! Now were they silent indeed. His whole life was before them; he had not lived in secret and yet he could appeal to his whole life, from the first day even to this time, and say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" It is this that

weakens our testimony for God that we are so imperfect and full of sin. Let us seek to imitate the Master, for the more clean we are from these imperfections, the more shall we be able to shut the mouths of our adversaries.

**47. 48.** *He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil.*

Always abuse your adversary if you cannot answer him: this is always the devil's tactic. When he cannot overthrow religion, then he seeks to append opprobrious titles to those who profess it. It is an old and stale trick, and has lost much of its force. Our Saviour did not answer the accusation of his being a Samaritan, but inasmuch as what they said about his having a devil would touch his doctrine, he answered that.

**49-51** *Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you. If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

The sting of it shall be taken away; he may fall asleep; he will do so, but he shall not see death.

**52-56.** *Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil Abraham is dead, and the prophets: and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say that he is your God: yet ye have not know him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.*

There is a great force in the original language here, "He was glad." There was an excessive joy which holy men had in looking forward to the coming of Christ. I do not think that we give ourselves enough room for joy in our religion. There are some persons who think it the right thing to restrain their emotions. They have no burstings forth of joy, and seldom a shout of sacred song. But oh! my brethren, if there is anything that deserves the flashing

eye, and the leaping foot, and the bounding heart, it is the great truth that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners, even the chief. Let us be glad so often as we make mention of his name.

**57.** *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*

Why, he was hardly thirty, but sorrow had made him appear old.

**58.** *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am.*

Here he claims his Deity to the fullest extent, and those who can read the New Testament, and profess to believe it, and yet not see Christ as a claimant of Deity, must be sinfully blind.

**59.** *Then, took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*

This is always the sinner's argument against the right: first, hard words, and then stones.

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 8:29-59. MARK 14:1-9. JOHN 12:1-7.

### **JOHN 8:31-59**

**31.** *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

For there were many, in Christ's day, coming to him for a while, and then going away from him; professing to believe, and then stumbling when Christ proclaimed some doctrine which struck them as being strange and hard to receive. Our Lord Jesus tells them that constancy is necessary to true discipleship. It is of no use to start running in the race unless we continue in the course till the prize is won. We are not true pilgrims to heaven merely because we cross the threshold of our door; we must keep on, and on, and on, till we reach the golden streets of the New Jerusalem.

**32.** *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

That is the result of being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. With Christ, who is the truth, to be our Teacher, and the Holy Spirit to bless his words, we come to know the truth; and the operation of the truth upon the heart is to deliver us from the bondage of sin and of error.

**33.** *They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?*

What a falsehood this was of theirs! They were at that very time in bondage to the Romans; they had been subdued and conquered: and, a little while after, they themselves confessed that they had no king but Cesar. Men are not very chary about telling falsehoods when they wish to resist Christ: they will do anything rather than believe on him.

**34.** *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

The man who habitually lives in sin is not a free man, for he is still a slave to sin. If he finds pleasure and delight in disobeying God, he has no right to talk about being a free man. His chains are rattling on his wrists; what can he know about freedom?

**35.** *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the son abideth even.*

A servant may be dismissed from the household, but a son may not. If we were only servants of God, we might fall from grace, and perish; but if we are the sons of God, we never shall. If we ever did, in truth, call God "Father," we shall always be able to use that blessed title, for the relationship of fatherhood is not a temporary one, sad cannot come to an end.

**36.** *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

If you have the freedom of sonship, you are free indeed. There are none so free in our Father's house as his children are.

**37-39.** *I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.*

The real descendants of "the father of the faithful" are themselves faithful; that is, believers. The father of believers has believers for his children: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." Our Lord had admitted that these Jews were Abraham's seed according to the flesh; but he proved that they

were not Abraham's seed in the high and spiritual sense, since they were not like him whom they claimed for a father.

**40, 41.** *But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father.*

He had not told them who that father was; but as it is a standing rule that men do the deeds of their father, the genuineness of the descent which they claimed could be tested by their likeness to their father.

**41, 42.** *Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me:*

Any man who is born of God must love Jesus Christ. The purity of his motives, the loveliness of his character, the charms of his person, would all be sure to win the heart of a man who was truly born of God.

**42, 43.** *For I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.*

“You are dull of comprehension, you are hardened in heart, you are proud in spirit, you are just the opposite of everything that is good, and therefore you cannot hear my word,” saith Christ; “and this is proof positive that you do not love God, and that you are not the children of God.”

**44.** *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.*

Remember from whose lips these words fell, even from the lips of the gentle Jesus. Honest speech is the surest token of a loving heart; but, nowadays, if a man preaches the truth plainly and faithfully, men say that he is hard and unkind; but if a man glosses over the truth, and alters it according to his own idea of what will please men, then they say, “He is a kindly-disposed and large-hearted man.” I should be disposed to doubt whether he has any heart at all, if he will sooner see sinners damned than offend them by proclaiming the truth. I thank God that some of us care little about offending those who offend God. If men will not yield themselves unto the Lord, we want not their friendship, but we will

strive to make them uneasy in their rebellion, and if they resolve to be lost, we will at least be clear of their blood.

**44.** *He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

Falsehood is his natural element. When Satan deceives, he only acts according to his nature, which is blackened with falsehood through and through.

**45, 46.** *And because I tell you the truth, ye Believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin?*

What a grand challenge! None of us can speak like that, except in a very modified sense; but Christ, standing before his enemies, who gnashed their teeth at him, and would have given their eyes to be able to fix some fault upon him, yet boldly says to them, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?”

**46-51.** *And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

This statement quite staggered them; yet it is true. To believers, — It is not death to die; they simply pass out of this world into a larger and yet more glorious life. They descend not to death, but they rise to immortality.

**52, 53.** *Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?*

“What dost thou pretend to be? Someone greater than Abraham and the prophets?”

**54-56.** *Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is our God: yet ye have not knownt him; but I know him: and if I should*

*say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham —*

“As ye call him “—

**56, 57.** *Rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*

They allowed a wide margin in specking of our Saviour’s age, for he was only thirty-three years old. It may be true that the sorrows of his life had so marred his countenance that he looked more like a man of fifty than one of three-and-thirty. I cannot tell, nor do I know whether that is what they meant; but it is singular that they should have said to him, “Thou art not yet fifty years old.”

**58.** *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

They had asked him, “Whom makest thou thyself?” and now they have his answer: “Before Abraham was, I am,” saith Christ. It is the very name by which God revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush, “I AM.” Yet Jesus takes this title to himself: “Before Abraham was,” — not, “I was;” notice that; but, “I am;” as if his life was one continued present existence, as indeed it is, for with God there is no past or future, but all things are ever-present to his infinite mind. When Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I am,” he claimed the Godhead, he declared that he was certainly God, self-existent from all eternity.

**59.** *Then took they up stones to cast at him:*

They counted him a blasphemer, and so he was if he was not all he claimed to be. I have heard of some who reverence Christ, but do not believe him to be God; but how can that be? He evidently made himself out to be God, and this was the great charge the Jews brought against him. For this, indeed, they put him to death, because he made himself equal with God. If he was not equal with God,— if he was not really God,— he led men to think that he was; and if this was false, it was a great sin not consistent with the holy character of Christ. If he was not God, he was the grossest impostor who ever visited this world. But he was God, and nothing less; yet because he claimed this, the Jews took up stones to cast at him.

**59.** *But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*

Glory be to his holy name for ever and ever!

**JOHN 8:37-59. (R.V.)**

We will read, from the Revised Version, two passages which record attempts made to kill our Lord before his time had come. You will see, from the sermon, why we read them. (See Luke 4:16-30)

**37-59.** *I know that ye are Abraham's seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you. I speak the things which I have seen with my Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father. They answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God. The Jews answered and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye dishonour me. But I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my word, he shall never see death. The Jews said unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the*

*prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that glorifieth me of whom ye say, that he is your God; and ye have not known him: but I know him; and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar: but I know him, and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.*

This exposition consisted of readings from LUKE 4:16-30; AND JOHN 8:37-59. (R.V.)

## **JOHN 9**

We will first read about one of our Lord's miracles, and then, as many of us will be coming to the communion table, we will read about the Lord's supper.

**1-3.** *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents:*

That is, the sin of the man or of his parents was not the cause of his being blind.

**3.** *But that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

What a very blessed way of looking at evil,—as an opportunity for God to manifest the power of his works of grace by getting rid of it! I wish that everyone here would look upon the evil within his own heart in this very hopeful light, and say, “There is something in me for God to conquer. There is some spiritual disease in me for the great Physician to heal. There is space in my poor soul for the Lord himself to work some miracle of mercy.”

**4-7.** *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when, no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

You notice, brethren, that the disciples wanted to know how the man became blind; but Christ removed his blindness, and gave him sight. I have known a great many puzzle themselves about the origin of evil. Christ did not come to explain that mystery; he came to put an end to evil. That, is an infinitely more practical object than that of speculating about how evil first entered the world, or how it entered any individual soul. He will tell you how to get rid of it. What a blessed way of healing Christ used! He could have spoken, and the man's eyes would have opened at once. He who said, "Let there be light," and there was light, in the first creation, could have said the same thing to this blind man, and light would at once have entered his eyes. Instead of that, he chose to use means, and the means did not appear to be very likely to effect the cure. Jesus covered the man's eyes with clay, and bade him go and wash it off again. Is this the way to give him sight? Yes, Our Lord often uses means that seem to be very unlikely to accomplish his purpose, But he always uses the right means. Often, when he is going to open a man's eyes spiritually, he first makes him feel more blind than ever he was before in all his life. A sense of deeper darkness hangs over him just before the dawn of eternal day. Perhaps, even this very hour some words of mine, human and imperfect as they must be, may, nevertheless, have the truth in them, just as the clay was made efficacious by the spittle from the Saviour's blessed mouth; and if so, there will be healing Work wrought among blind hearts tonight. God grant that it may be so!

**8, 9.** *The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he; others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.*

There is an end of all question about the matter; he says, "I am the very man." No one knew this better than he did, and therefore he was the one to say it.

**10, 11.** *Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.*

A very plain story, very well told. It is the story of every soul that gets the eternal light. "Christ told me to believe in him; I did believe in him; and. I received the blessing," There are not many

incidents in the narrative, and there is nothing very romantic; but it is a simple and plain declaration of what Christ had done for him; and, blessed be God, just as sight was given to the blind man, Christ still gives salvation to all who trust him.

“There is life for a look at the Crucified One;  
There is life at this moment for thee;  
Then look, sinner,—look unto him, and be saved,—  
Unto him who was nail’d to the tree.  
“It is not thy tears of repentance or prayers,  
But the blood that atones for the soul:  
On him, then, who shed it, believing at once,  
Thy weight of iniquities roll.  
“But take, with rejoicing, from Jesus at once  
The life everlasting he gives:  
And know, with assurance, thou never canst die,  
Since Jesus, thy righteousness, lives.”

**12-14.** *Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.*

Oh, that he would do the same thing, in a spiritual sense, this Sabbath day! On another occasion, when he had wrought a miracle on the Sabbath, and the Jews therefore sought to persecute him, and slay him, he said to them, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” The Sabbath day was often Christ’s chief working day; may he make it to be so again now!

**15-17.** *Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight, He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.*

There was no mistake about that matter in the mind of the man whom he had healed; none but a prophet, mighty in word and deed, could have wrought such a miracle as that.

**18-21.** *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, ask him: he shall speak for himself.*

And so he did. He was one of those people who can speak for themselves; and it is greatly to be wished that many more of those who have been cured by Christ could do the same. He was a conscientious man, who, without fear of offending or any desire to curry favor, spoke out honestly what he knew,—nothing more.

**22-27.** *These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had, agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?*

He was a sharp, ready-witted man, who was not to be enticed into making any rash and unguarded statements, he knew what he did know, and he kept to that; and whenever any of you are assailed by the enemies of Christ, you will do well to imitate this man, and neither be abashed by their frowns and sneers, nor yet be too ready to cast your pearls before swine.

**28.** *Then they reviled him,—*

That is the usual way with the men of the world; when they cannot beat a man in argument, they begin to call him bad names: “They reviled him,”—

**28-31.** *And said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is,*

*and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners:*

That is to say, he does not work miracles by them; he does not hear their prayers, and give them the power to open blind men's eyes.

**31-33.** *But if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

Christ could not have given sight to the blind man if he had not himself come from God. This was good reasoning, and it would have been convincing if the objectors had been willing to be convinced by the truth.

**34.** *They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?*

“Holy and learned people like us, Pharisees, do you set up to be our teacher?”

**34-38.** *And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.*

Then was his cure indeed complete. He had seen Christ spiritually as well as naturally, and fell at his feet, and worshipped him as the Son of God.

**39-41.** *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.*

And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, if ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 9., AND 1 CORINTHIANS 10:15-33, AND 11:1.

## JOHN 9

**1-3.** *And as Jesus passed by he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

We are not to look upon such afflictions as any indication of special sin on the part either of the person or the parent. Of course, sin lies at the root of all our suffering as a grit generic fact, but not so that we may attribute such an affliction to any one sin. The disciples, you see, dear friends, are thinking about difficult problems. Their Master is thinking about how, practically, to meet the difficulty, and to this day there are a large number of Christians, professors, and even ministers, who occupy their time about questions which really are to no profit. If they could be answered, nobody would be the holier or the better. What does it matter to us what is the origin of evil? Far more important to turn the evil out than it is to find out how it came in. Very frequently, you know, after there is a terrible calamity or accident, we have an inquiry as to how it was done, and then we think the thing is all attended too. It would have been better, perhaps, to have an inquiry, before it was done, as to how it could be prevented. Our Lord has that wisdom — that practicalness. He begins to deal with the evil rather than to raise questions about it. Yes, and he sees in that evil a good coming out of it. He says that this man was blind, that the works of God might be made manifest in him

**4-7.** *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And said unto, him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

Our Lord used instrumentality. It did not appear, however, to be very likely to achieve his purpose. The clay seemed more likely to blind than to give sight, yet if the Lord chooses to use the poor and weak instruments that seem nothing better than dust and spittle, he has the glory of the grand result. If he takes the humble ministry of

his servants and uses it in the pulpit, or in the Sunday School, or anywhere else, he has all the more glory, and is the less likely to be robbed of it because he uses such unlikely means.

**8, 9.** *The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was, blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he:*

We are sure of it.

**9.** *Others said, He is like him:*

They were cautious bodies.

**9.** *But he said, I am he.*

He knew there was no mistaking his witness.

**10, 11.** *Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.*

Very straightforward, very concise, very accurate, and when we make answer about our conversion, it is always well to take this for a copy—not too many flourishes, no coloring. He even leaves out about the spittle, but he gives it all as he can recollect it; so when you are talking about the Lord's love to you, and his way of converting you, it is quite sufficiently remarkable, without any touch of rouge. Let it be given just as it is.

**12.** *Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said I know not.*

Enough for him to know what he did know—that his eyes were opened, and how it was done. So sometimes I have known persons come upon the new convert with a question which has rather baffled him, and he has been troubled, because he could not answer it. Do not let it trouble you. You are not expected to know everything. The very best and most honest thing is to say, "I know not"

**13-14.** *They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.*

So you may be sure that the Pharisees would be down upon him for that, because, according to the Rabbis, the making of the clay to put upon this man's eyes would be a kind of brick-making, and they would bring him in guilty of brick-making directly. So did these

men pervert things and make men guilty where no offence had been committed whatsoever.

**15.** *Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.*

He is shorter with them. Some tales grow in telling. His gets shorter.

Besides, he has to deal with captious people; and then the least said the soonest mended; and this shrewd man thought so.

**16, 17.** *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.*

He could see that.

**18-24.** *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.*

How piously these Pharisees can talk; and generally in the name of God all sorts of mischief begin. When men are persecuting the Son of God, yet still they take the name of God upon their lips. Did they not burn the martyrs to the glory of God? Oh! yes, and so did these men thus slander Christ by saying, "We know that this man is a sinner," and yet they spoke about giving God praise.

**25.** *He*

Our shrewd friend of the opened eyes.

**25-27.** *Answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them. I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?*

The man is sharp, acute, cutting.

**28, 29.** *Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.*

The word "fellow" is supplied by the translators. There is no such word there, because they did not know a word bad enough with which to express their scorn.

**30-33.** *The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

He proves; he administrates. The thing is as clear as possible, and yet they refuse to see it.

**34.** *They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins,*

It is the old rule, "Abuse the plaintiff." Nothing could be said. Now abuse the man. He has answered you, and his arguments are too hard for you. Now throw hard words at him. "Thou wast altogether born in sins."

**34.** *And dost thou teach us?*

Wonderful, that "us." "Dost thou teach us?" Folly, ignorance, and pride go together. This man, in the simplest and most unaffected manner, had told his tale and urged his argument, and now they abuse him and exalt themselves. "Dost thou teach us?" No, great Pharisees, he does not teach you, for you will not learn.

**34.** *And they cast him out.*

That is the last argument. Out with him. Now we have defeated him.

**35.** *Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when he had found him,*

What a blessed thing to be cast out, if Christ finds us! Many and many have been put out of the synagogue and treated with contempt, but then outside Jerusalem they found their Lord, for there he died without the camp, and his people need not be ashamed to go after him bearing his reproach.

“When he had found him.”

**35-38.** *He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord. that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him. Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.*

He does not appear to have been a Unitarian, therefore; and if those persons had their eyes opened, they would do the same. “He said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.”

**39.** *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.*

Christ is the turner of the tables. Did not the virgin mother sing, “He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and he hath exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he hath sent empty away”? So he ever does.

**41.** *Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind,*

Really could not see.

**41.** *Ye should have no sin;*

If you really did not know better, were totally and altogether without knowledge — then you would have no sin compared with what you now have.

**41.** *But now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*

You acknowledge that you have sinned with your eyes open, and,

therefore, your sin is all the greater.

## JOHN 9

**1-2.** *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth, And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*

The procedure of these disciples is very much like that of many people in these days; they are much more ready to ask questions about sufferers than they are to sympathize with them. If the hearts of the disciples had been in a right condition when they saw this blind man, they would have said, "Lord, cannot this poor man's eyes be opened?" But, instead of risking like that, they were full of idle curiosity, which prompted them to raise metaphysical difficulties, and to ask foolish questions. So they wanted to know how it was that the man came to be born blind. Was it in consequence of some sin on the part of his parents, or through some sin of his own in a previous state of existence, (for some of them seem to have had even that foolish notion,) or was it because of some sin of his, which God foresaw that he would commit, and therefore laid this affliction upon him from the hour of his birth?

**3.** *Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

That is to say, this blindness was not the result of special sin in any individual, but God intended that his works of mercy and of grace should be manifested through his affliction. It is a cruel thing when every form of malady or disease is traced to some fault in the person who has to suffer from it. This is infamous; I had almost said infernal; for Satan himself could hardly devise a more false and wicked thing than to say that, because a man is a special sufferer, therefore he must have been a special sinner. It is not so; for, often, some of God's truest children — some of those who live nearest to him — are those who keep the night watches through pain, or they are bedridden from year to year, or are deprived of some of their limbs, or in some other way are full of suffering. This is in order that, in their case also, the works of God should be manifest in them as they were in this poor blind man.

**4.** *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day:*

"I have no time to go into these questions with you, merely to satisfy your curiosity. 'While it is day,' I must go on with the work which I was sent into the world to do."

*4-7. The night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

There was no long discourse to be delivered while this poor man was waiting to see what would happen to him. Our Lord spoke just a few words to his disciples, and then went at once to the miracle he intended to perform. "When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." Our Saviour sometimes works without means, at other times by means, and occasionally he uses means which at first sight appear not to be the best to produce the designed result. To put clay on a blind man's eyes, does not seem a very likely operation for giving him sight. And, oh! dear friends, when God uses us as his instruments, and makes us to be like this clay upon the poor blind man's eyes, I am sure that there is much about us that might make us feel as if we should rather hinder than help; and when we do the best we can, what is there in us that is of any value? I think I once saw the pen with which Milton was said to have written part of Paradise Lost.

Poor pen! It could not remember the great poet, could it? Yet, he had used it to noble purpose. As I looked at it, I did not think of ascribing a single stanza of that matchless poem to the pen with which Milton wrote. So, beloved, we are the pens that the Lord uses when he means to write his messages of grace upon the hearts of saints and sinners; but we are such poor pens, such feeble instruments to be held in his hand, that we wonder he can ever make use of us. This blind man did exactly as he was bidden to do. What a blessing it was for him that he received the clay on his eyes, and simply went and washed it off again as the Saviour bade him! That was all he had to do, and then he came back seeing clearly. Oh, if sinners were only attentive to gospel directions, and then were obedient to them, without adding to them or taking from them, how many more blind eyes would be very speedily opened, and how greatly would Christ be glorified!

**8, 9.** *The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.*

With that downright simplicity and shrewdness which marked his whole character, the man said, "I am he." He did not go beating about the bush at all, but he straightway acknowledged that he was the man of whom they were speaking.

**10, 11.** *Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight.*

I admire the brevity of his statement, the boldness of it, and the simple naiveté of it. The way in which he told the story did not embellish it in the least degree; in fact, it could not have been embellished without spoiling it. And when you, dear friends, are giving an account of your own conversion, describing the way in which salvation became yours, tell it as simply and plainly as ever you can. It will never be so well adorned as when it appears in its own naked simplicity and beauty. I commend this man's example to all of you who have to give your testimony before you are admitted as members of the church; when speaking of your conversion, put the narrative in as plain and simple a form as this man adopted.

**12-14.** *Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.*

Therefore, this act of Christ would be something horrible in the eyes of the Pharisees. They would make out that Christ, when he made the clay, had turned brickmaker on the Sabbath day, thus violating the traditions of the fathers, just as, on another occasion, they said that he allowed his disciples to go threshing on the Sabbath, when they gathered ears of corn in the field, rubbed them between their hands, and ate the grain because they were hungry. The Rabbis regarded that as an act of threshing, and a very serious violation of the law; and now that Jesus had himself made clay, and opened a man's eyes with it, they held up their hands in holy horror, —nay, in impious horror, — that Christ should do such a thing on the Sabbath.

**15.** *Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.*

He makes his story shorter as he goes on telling it. These people were unworthy of the words he spoke to them, and therefore he gave them as few as possible.

**16, 17.** *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.*

That was as much as he then knew. By thoughtful consideration, he had come as far as to know that Jesus must be a prophet.

**18-21.** *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.*

They also were shrewd. They did not wish to get themselves into trouble, and therefore they said as little as they could, and referred the Pharisees to their son, who was quite able to answer them.

**22-24.** *These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.*

They thought that they could smooth the man over, so that he would say no more. "We know — we who know everything, we who are the rulers and teachers of the people, — we know that this man is a sinner." That might have closed the mouths of many men; but, on that occasion, they had before them a person who could not easily be made to believe all they chose to say, — a sharp, shrewd man, who had keener eyes in his head, even when he was blind, than they had while they could see.

**25.** *He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*

“About that point, I am perfectly certain, whatever question there may be concerning anything else.”

**26-28.** *Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?*

Then they reviled him, —As they could not answer him, they reviled him. It is the old plan which is still followed by certain lawyers, “No case; therefore abuse the plaintiff.” “They reviled him,” —

**28, 29.** *And said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: As for this —*

They did not say “fellow,” because they meant something worse than that, something which they could not express: “As for this — “

**29, 30.** *We know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.*

They were the gentlemen who said, “We know,” and they wanted, a little while before, to silence him by parading their superior knowledge; so now he turns upon them, and says, “Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.”

**31.** *Now we know that God heareth not sinners:*

He meant men who are living in known sin, impostors and deceivers. Of course, God would not hear sinners of that stamp.

**31-33.** *But if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

This was bravely spoken. The man did not, at that time, know the Godhead of the Saviour, but he felt that he must have come from God, that he was one of God's servants, or messengers, or prophets, therefore he avowed what he knew. Dear friends, always act up to the light you have enjoyed. If you have starlight, thank God for it, and own it before men, for then he will give you moonlight; and if

you have moonlight, walk by it, thank God for it, and own it, and he will give you sunlight; and when you have sunlight, walk in it, and so, one of these days, you will come to that light which is as the light of seven days, the light of God himself.

**34.** *They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?*

Their dignity was touched; their superlative wisdom lifted them so much above this poor man that they said, with the utmost disdain, "Dost thou teach us?"

**34, 35.** *And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out;*

Oh! if there are any of you who are suffering persecution for Christ's sake, who have been cast out of any company because of what he has done for you, I do not think you need any sweeter comfort than this one line: "Jesus heard that they had cast him out;"

**35-37.** *And when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.*

I scarcely remember that, up to this time, the Lord Jesus had given such a manifestation of himself to anyone except to the Samaritan woman at the well. When she mentioned the Messiah, he said to her, "I that speak unto thee am he;" and here he reveals himself to this man as the Son of God, which was somewhat more than that woman probably meant by the term "Messias."

**38.** *And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.*

Which proves that the man was not a Unitarian. "He worshipped him" who had opened his eyes, and we also will worship him for ever and ever, blessed be his holy name!

**39-41.** *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.*

And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth. It would have been better for them if

they had known their blindness, and applied to him who could give them sight, and forgive their sin.

## **JOHN 9**

**1.** *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.*

Therefore the man could not see Jesus, but the more important matter was that Christ could see the blind man. And you, dear heart, may not yet have learned to look on Christ, but he can look on you in your blindness, and a look from him will speedily work a wondrous change in you.

**2.** *And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*

Many of Christ's disciples are still occupied in asking questions that serve no practical purpose, like this one, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

**3.** *Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents:*

That is to say, sin on their part was not the cause of his blindness.

**3.** *But that the works of God should be made manifest in him*

Human nature is a platform for the manifestation of divine work. The more in need you are, dear friend, the more room there is for God's mercy to operate upon you.

**4-7.** *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."*

Christ used very simple means to cure this man's blindness, very unlikely means, apparently, to produce the desired effect. It might have seemed, indeed, that the man would have been worse in the dark than ever when his eyes were plastered over with clay, yet the Lord chose to work in that way.

And so, when the poor preacher feels as if he was nothing and nobody, and that his agency may rather hinder his Master's work

than help him yet still his Lord can work through his weakness, and get to himself glory notwithstanding his servant's infirmities.

**8, 9.** *The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.*

“There is no question about my identity, I am the same man whom you have seen sitting and begging, and I now come before you with my sight fully restored.”

**10, 11.** *Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, a man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.*

It was only a short story, but it was very sweet to him, and he told it with no excess of detail, but with all its salient points. He was a sharp, shrewd man of few words, but those few words were weighty. Friend when thou tellest the story of Christ and his love to thee, do not embellish it with flowers of speech. There is enough in what Christ has done to make it shine without any fine words of thine. The beauty of Christ's work is such that it is most adorned when unadorned.

**12.** *Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.*

There are a good many things concerning Christ which you may not know, but if you know that he has opened your eyes, you may be well content with the knowledge of that until he shall be pleased to reveal more about himself to you.

**13.** *They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.*

I am sure that this was a very distressing sight to them, for there was nothing that ever grieved their hearts more than for Christ's power to be displayed. They did not want to see the blind man whose eyes Christ had opened; if the miracle brought Christ any glory, it brought them just so much misery.

**14, 15.** *And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.*

That seemed to be the principal question with them; they always wanted to know the manner in which Christ's cures were wrought.

**15.** *He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.*

That is shorter than his previous account of the miracle. When Pharisees ask a carping question, the shorter the answer the better; it is a pity to cast pearls before swine.

**16,17.** *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes! He said, He is a prophet.*

He was a brave man, who dared to say what he believed whether he offended or pleased. He did not know much, but what he did know he did know, and he was quite certain about it. There are some men whose breadth of knowledge is as remarkable as its shallowness. It is like water upon the meadows when a river overflows its banks, and covers a wide area, but there is scarcely an inch of depth. Give us the narrower river that is deep, and that can bear onwards to the ocean a noble fleet, rather than the wide expanse of useless, shallow water.

**18-21.** *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.*

They were timid, but they were also shrewd enough to let their son speak for himself, as he was quite able to do.

**22-24.** *These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.*

They thought they could get over him by giving him a little of what they called good advice: "Praise God, but be quiet concerning this man; depend upon it, he is a sinner."

**25-28.** *He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciple? Then they reviled him, —*

Of course, that is the usual way with those who are in the wrong. Abuse the plaintiff when you cannot answer his case. “Then they reviled him,” —

**28-30.** *And said, Thou art his disciple but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.*

Where could he have come from but from God? Who could have wrought such a miracle unless he had been sent from God?

**31-33.** *Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

That was very forcibly spoken. Oh, that all of us, whose eyes Christ has opened, would speak for him as bravely as this man did! Our cure has been quite as clear and quite as notable as his was, so let us not be ashamed to testify for him before gainsayers and opposers.

**34.** *They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?*

“Such learned men as we are, with such culture and such penetration as we have, ‘dost thou teach us?’”

**34.** *And they cast him out.*

It was a great mercy for him that they did excommunicate him, one of the greatest blessings that could come to him was that of being cast out of the synagogue, and being cast out of the society of such men as those Pharisees were.

**35.** *Jesus heard that they had cast him out; —*

Jesus knew all that had happened to this man, but someone probably related the story to him; and our Lord knows all about each one of us, and he knows whether anyone here is suffering for his sake or for the truth's sake. Jesus knew that they had cast him out;

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**35.** *And when he had found him, —*

For he always finds those whom the world or false professors have cast out, —

**35, 36.** *He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?*

He was a sensible man, and he had the sense to perceive that knowledge rightly used leads to faith. He desired to know in order that he might believe; and if you ever say that you cannot believe, but are anxious to do so, then make enquiry as to what is to be believed, examine the evidence concerning it, and so faith will come to you by the operation of God's good Spirit.

**37-40.** *And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?*

“Are we blind?” It seemed impossible to them that it could be so. Jesus answered them with scathing words: —

**41.** *Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*

“If what you have done had been done in utter ignorance, you would have been comparatively guiltless; but you have sinned against light and knowledge, with a most determined antipathy to the grace of God, and therefore your sin remaineth in all its scarlet hue to condemn you.”

## **JOHN 9:1-7**

**1-7.** *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of*

*God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way before, and washed, and came seeing.*

I will not say anything now about this miracle, as it will form the subject of my discourse.

This exposition consisted of readings from MARK 10:46-52; AND JOHN 9:1-7.

### **JOHN 9:1-14**

**1-3.** *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents:*

That is to say, their sin was not the cause of his blindness.

**3-14.** *But that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.*

This gracious act of Christ was made another occasion of complaint on the part of the Pharisees, and it is the sixth instance in

which we are very specially and definitely informed that our Lord Jesus Christ wrought miracles of healing on the Sabbath-day. Oh, that he would do similar works in our midst even now in a spiritual sense, if not literally!

This exposition consisted of readings from LUKE 4:33-36; 6:6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; JOHN 5:1-9; ND 9:1-14.

### **JOHN 9: 1-38**

**1, 2.** *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind*

Christ's disciples were often inquisitive even when their Master was bent upon giving proofs of his practical benevolence. Fools may sometimes ask questions which wise men may not think it proper to answer; but on this occasion, our Saviour gave an answer to the enquiry which his disciples had put to him.

**3, 4.** *Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents : but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*

Think of our Lord being under the necessity of working: "I must work." Men say that "Must is for the king;" but here is the King of kings declaring that work is, by the most urgent necessity, laid upon him; so will not you, beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, come under this divine necessity? Will not you feel that you also must be doing all you can for your Divine Lord and Master?

**5.** *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

While Christ was here on earth, he was the great Light-Giver, and he is still the great Light-Giver; and now that his visible presence has been withdrawn from the world, his people are to be "the light of the world" by reflecting the light they have received from him. In such works as you will be unable to perform after death, you are now to give light to the sons of men.

**6-9.** *When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed,*

and came seeing. The neighbours therefore. and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged ? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

“There is no mistake about this; I know that I am that man.”

**10, 11.** *Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said,—*

In his own quick, clear, intelligent way, for he was a man who evidently had twice as many eyes in his brain as other people had, even while he had none with which he could see: “He answered and said,—

**11-14.** *A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash : and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.*

You may be sure that the Pharisees would be in high dudgeon because Christ did that; for, according to their stupid superstition, to make clay with spittle was a kind of brick-making which must not be done on the Sabbath-day, and they would, for that reason, condemn Christ as a breaker of the Sabbath.

**15.** *Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.*

Now that he has to deal with Pharisees, he will not waste a word upon them. The more often he tells the story, the shorter it becomes. That is not the usual rule with stories; they generally grow like snowballs as they roll along until, at last, you would hardly recognize the original story. So much has been added to it as it has been told again and again. But this honest, straightforward man cuts the story down to the barest details, and yet tells it well.

**16, 17.** *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such Miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.*

He felt that he could safely go as far as that, for Jesus could not have wrought such a miracle as that if he had not been a prophet sent by God.

**18-21.** *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.*

These parents, though in humble life, were evidently, like their son, sharp and shrewd; so they referred the question to the one who knew how to answer it.

**22-24.** *These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him,—*

They wanted to see if they could catch him in his talk; so they said to him, in a very pious fashion:—

**24.** *Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.*

Dear me what wonderful “knowledge” those Pharisees had!

**25.** *He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*

There was no driving him out of that stronghold. That which is a matter of our own personal experience is a thing about which we may well feel positively certain. I wish we had more Christian people firmly established in their faith because it is a matter of deep, heartfelt, personal experience with them. I like to meet a man who can say, “I am willing to yield to opponents upon certain points concerning which I am not quite sure; but the fact of the efficacy of the gospel of God’s grace, the power of the precious blood of Jesus to cleanse the heart and conscience, the divine operation of the Holy Spirit within the soul,—all these are truths which I cannot and will not yield. Like this man, I can say, ‘One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.’”

**26, 27.** *Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?*

He carried the war into the enemy's camp, as well he might.

**28.** *Then they reviled him,—*

That is an unprincipled lawyer's rule,—When you cannot answer the plaintiff's argument, abuse him. This was the last resort of those who knew that they had a bad case, or no case at all: "Then they reviled him,"—

**28-31.** *And said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners:*

The man meant, God does not open blind eyes by the hands of sinners. He does not work miracles to bear witness to the agency of ungodly men.

**31-33.** *But if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

Bravo, you who used to be blind! What an irresistible thing truth is, whoever handles it! These Pharisees, keen of intellect, well instructed in the letter of the law, yet crafty, up to their eyes in self-conceit, are like chaff driven before the wind when a plain-speaking man does but handle the truth of the living God. Never be afraid or ashamed to spread the gospel of Christ, my brethren and sisters; nay,

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"Speak his Word, though kings should hear,  
Nor yield to sinful shame."

A beggar with the truth is mightier than priests and princes with a lie.

**34.** *They answered and said unto him,*

What could they say to him? Nothing but more reviling and abuse.

**34.** *Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.*

That is the last argument of all. “We cannot answer him, so let us turn him out!”

**35.** *Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him,— Oh, how he*

rejoices in finding those that are cast out by the world, or by the self-righteous: “When he had found him,”—

**35, 36.** *He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said,—*

Note the humility of the man’s tone, how changed it is from that sharpness, that acerbity to which he had been driven by his enemies: “He answered and said,”—

**36.** *Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?*

He is a lamb before Christ though he was a lion before the Pharisees. That is the true Christian character,—gentle, tender, humble, meek, in the presence of the God of mercy, but with no trembling, no giving way in the presence of the adversaries of Christ and his truth.

**37, 38.** *And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.*

He was no Unitarian: “he worshipped him.” And you, beloved, cannot help worshipping him who has opened your eyes spiritually. It is those who are still blind who will not worship him; but once let us feel the touch of his light-giving finger, once let us know that he has shed his eternal light into the darkness of our souls, and we shall not be satisfied with the mere verbal avowal of our faith, we shall add to it our reverent adoration, as this man did when he first said, “Lord, I believe;” and then “worshipped him.”

## **JOHN 9:1-38**

**1.** *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.*

The man could not see Jesus, but sight came to the man from Jesus. If there are any here who cannot look to Christ as yet, our prayer is that he may look on them as he looked on this blind man.

*2. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*

Beloved, if you had Christ with you, you could occupy your time better than in asking such questions as this; and I think that, when we go to Holy Scripture, we can do better than pry into things of small practical importance, or even into great mysteries. However, in this case, since the disciples were liable to fall into grave error, our Lord gave them instruction upon the matter that perplexed them.

*3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

In other words, this man is not blind as the result of sin in himself, or in his parents. He is blind in order that God may have a platform for the display of his gracious power in healing him.

*4, 5. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

Our Saviour felt that he was commissioned as a servant of his Father, sent here to do a certain work, and he must be doing it. It is well for God's servants to feel a holy compulsion. It does not take away from them the freedom of their action, and their delight in the service of God; but still it exercises a powerful influence over a man when he feels, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel;" or when, like the Lord Jesus, he says, "I must work the works of him that sent me." Did the Well-beloved, the Prince of Heaven, come under compulsion? Did he put himself under that "must" which is for the king? Then you and I may well put ourselves under holy bondage for the Lord. Then, do not hinder me; do not tell me that I am too feeble in health; "I must work the works of him that sent me."

*6, 7. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

Our Lord often works miracles without means, and sometimes with means which appear to be quite inappropriate. It would seem to be more easy to blind a man with clay than to open his eyes with it; and there are some who assert that the gospel plainly spoken would

lead men into sin, but it does not. It is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” If you go to work in the name of God, if you put the clay on the sinner’s eyes, and bid him go and wash, you will see what will happen.

**8-11.** *The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A Man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.*

Does he not tell his story well? If he had not been a blind man whose eyes had just been opened, he would have exaggerated somewhere or other. I never heard a man tell a tale with absolute correctness; it is not the way of people, they are sure to put in some little item by way of garnishing, for there is a bump of romance in most men’s heads; but this shrewd, strictly honest man tells the story briefly, but leaves out no important particular.

**12-15.** *Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.*

That was short and sweet; and when you have to deal with Pharisees, do not give them much. They are not worth it, and they are sure to misuse it. When he spoke to the common people, he enlarged, and gave them details; but now that he comes to talk to these pragmatistical professors, he cuts it down to as few words as possible.

**16.** *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.*

Yes, and there is a division among the enemies of Christ always; they cannot agree among themselves. If they could always lay their heads together, and agree, they might have greater power; but the Edomites draw their swords against the children of Ammon, and

they are sure to slay one another in the long run. There were also some among these Pharisees who had a conscience, men like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea; and they asked, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?"

**17.** *They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.*

He must be a prophet. He could not have worked such a miracle as that if he had been a common man: "He said, He is a prophet."

**18.** *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.*

You see, John gives to the Pharisees the name which they arrogated to themselves: "we are Jews." But they were not true Jews. They called themselves Jews, and so John speaks of them as "the Jews." It often happens that a certain clique or party will run away with a name which does not belong to them any more than it does to a great many who differ from them very widely. These Pharisees pretended that they would not believe the miracle. It was manifest before their eyes; but yet they would not believe it until they called his parents.

**19-21.** *And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.*

This was very shrewd on their part; but I think that I must add that it was very cowardly to throw all the testimony on their son. There are some parents who, if their children do right, if they follow Christ, seem to leave them to take care of themselves.

**22.** *These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.*

Excommunicated; and they could not bear to be cut off from the respectable society which they had hitherto enjoyed.

**23, 24.** *Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.*

Does it not sound pretty from their Pharisaic lips? Arch hypocrites pretending to teach a man who knew much better than themselves! “We know that this man is a sinner. You did not know it, but we know it and as we know it, and we are doctors, you must believe it.”

**25.** *He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*

He could not be beaten out of that. You cannot argue a man out of an experience of this kind; and if the Lord Jesus Christ has ever opened your eyes, dear friend, nobody can make you doubt that blessed fact.

**26, 27.** *Then said they to him again, What did he do to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?*

He threw a little sarcasm into that last question. The man was a very remarkable person, a simple-hearted, honest man, but withal quite able to hold his own in any company.

**28.** *Then they reviled him,*

It is a bad case, so abuse the plaintiff. There is nothing to be said for our side, so let us abuse the man who has had his eyes opened.

**28-30.** *And said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.*

Does not that manifestation of miraculous power show where he must have come from? Could he have come from anywhere but from God?

**31-33.** *Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

Well argued! The case is proven indeed.

**34.** *They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?*

Cannot you hear them say it? “A blind beggar, who has just begun to see, ‘Dost thou teach us?’ — D.D.’s, men who are learned in the law, ‘Dost thou teach us?’” Well, brethren, if a man has only one eye, he may teach those who have not any, for the old proverb says, “In the realm of the blind, the man with one eye is king.” Yet there is another proverb on this subject, and that is, “In the realm of the blind, the man with one eye gets hanged.” That was likely to be the case here; the blind Pharisees could not bear the man who could see. He knew too much for them.

**34-36.** *And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?*

He wanted instruction. Christ may have done much for a man, but he may not as yet fully know the Lord. There may be some here tonight upon whom Christ has wrought a great deal, and yet you do not know him as you will know him: “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”

**37, 38.** *And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.*

That is the way with a genuine believer, he worships Christ. Why? Because he believes him to be God. It would be idolatry to worship Christ if he were only man, and Christ would have been an impostor if he had allowed this man to worship him if he had not been God. But he was God; and we, believing him to be God, worship Christ as very God of very God, to whom be praise forever and ever! Amen.

## **JOHN 10:1-18**

**1, 2.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.*

The true Shepherd cares for the flock, the false ones are thieves and robbers who only care for the flesh or the fleece.

**3.** *To him the porter openeth and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*

John the Baptist was the porter who opened the door of Christ's earthly ministry by bearing witness that he was the Son of God.

**4, 5.** *And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.*

Christ is the great Leader of his people, and they will never go astray so long as they follow him. The sheep of Christ recognize their Shepherd's voice, and come at his call; but "strangers" call to them in vain.

**6, 7.** *This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.*

No one metaphor can fully describe our glorious Lord, for he is both Shepherd and Door to the sheep, and all else that they need.

"O my Saviour! Shield and Sun,  
Shepherd, Brother, Husband, Friend, —  
Every precious name in one,  
I will love thee without end."

**8-10.** *All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

The thief came to take away life, but Christ came to give life, and that abundant life which shall last for ever and ever; but see what it cost him to give that life: —

**11-13.** *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.*

*The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.*

Just now the contrast was between the Shepherd and the thief. Here it is between the Shepherd and the hireling. The hireling cares for himself; the Shepherd cares for the sheep and provides for them and cares for them even at the cost of his life.

**14, 15.** *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

There is mutual knowledge between the Shepherd and the sheep, and between the Father and the Son.

**16.** *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*

Or, more correctly, “one flock, one Shepherd.” The flock would never be complete without those “other sheep” which the Shepherd says he must bring into the fold, and which he says shall hear his voice. Not one of them will be missing in the day when they pass again under the hand of him that telleth them.

**17, 18.** *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

The voluntariness of Christ’s sacrifice is its glory, and well may his Father love him because of it; and well may we, who are eternally to benefit by his death, also love him.

### **JOHN 10:1-30**

**1.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*

The positiveness of our Lord’s teaching is noteworthy. Whatever may be said about dogmatical teaching now, it is certain that his teaching is of that character. He does not raise questions, but he solves them. He does not suggest probabilities, but he declares certainties. This might be taken as the key-word to all the Saviour’s teaching, “Verily, verily.” He makes a strong asseveration; he

speaks as one having authority, not as the scribes who only claimed to have authority, but as the Sent One of the Father who really has it: “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” Whatever comes to us with the imprimatur of the “Verily, verily,” of the Son of God is not to be questioned or doubted by us for a single moment. “He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.” Christ himself did enter by the door. He came according to the ancient types, and symbols, and prophecies. He came as God said that he would come. He entered by the door. There is no irregularity about Christ’s office as the Shepherd of his sheep. It is confirmed to him by the sanction of the Holy Ghost. The witness of the Father is borne to him: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him.” We rejoice to think that Jesus our Saviour is also Christ the Anointed. He is Jesus to us, but he is the Anointed of the Father. He comes by right as the appointed Shepherd of the sheep entering in by the door.

**2, 3.** *But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth;—To him*

John the Baptist, as the porter, opened the door. He pointed to him, and said “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” And every God-sent minister is a porter to Christ, opening the door to him; that is our office, — to stand and open the door that Christ may come forth among you, and that you may come in to him, and find the spiritual pasture on which your souls can feed. “To him the porter openeth;” —

**3.** *And the sheep hear his voice:*

Those who are really chosen of God hear and heed the voice of Christ but those who are not Christ’s chosen ones will not heed his discourse, but will listen to the many voices which attract the ears and the hearts of sinful men. The elect of God are known by this mark, that they hear the voice of Christ. Just as you can find out, in a heap of ashes, whether there are any pieces of steel there by simply thrusting in a magnet so can you find out God’s chosen people by the mighty magnet of Christ’s voice.

**3.** *And he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*

Sometimes he leads them out from the midst of the world’s flocks, and sometimes he calls them by name when they are in his fold, and leads them out to even higher and better pastures, calls

them and leads them out to higher truths than they have before received.

**4.** *And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them,*

—  
Christ never drives his sheep, he leads them. As the Eastern shepherd always goes before his sheep, so does the Saviour go before his flock: “He goeth before them,” —

**4.** *And the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*

Christ’s sheep are marked in various ways. They are marked on the foot:

“the sheep follow him.” And they are marked in the ear, “for they know his voice.” They follow the track of their Shepherd, and they give heed to the voice of their Shepherd; and by these tokens they are known to be his sheep.

**5.** *And a stranger will they not follow, —*

There are strangers constantly coming into our different churches. We know they are strangers, for they preach strange doctrines, and do not keep to the old paths. Those that are not Christ’s sheep follow them directly. “Here is a very clever man,” say they, and off they go after him; but of God’s elect it is written, “A stranger will they not follow,” —

**5.** *But will flee from him: —*

They are frightened at the very sight of him. They cannot tell what deadly pasture he is preparing for them, so they “flee from him,” —

**5.** *For they know not the voice of strangers.*

They know the voice of their Shepherd, but they know not the voice of strangers, so they flee from them.

**6.** *This parable spake Jesus unto them but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.*

They thus proved that they were not his sheep, for they did not understand his words.

**7, 8.** *Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.*

There were many false christs that rose up before Jesus Christ appeared, and there were many persons who followed those false

christs, “but the sheep did not hear them.” They still waited with holy Anna, with patient Simeon, and the rest of the faithful who waited for the appearing of the true Shepherd, and were not misled by the pretenders who were only “thieves and robbers.”

**9.** *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”*

Christ is the door just as truly as he is the shepherd, and as he is everything that is needful and good for his people. If I come to Christ, I must come to him by Christ. Any of us who will but enter in by Christ, who is the door of his Church, shall find salvation, and more than that, we shall find liberty, for we “shall go in and out.” Our daily pathway shall be a safe one, and we shall have abundant supplies for all our daily needs. We “shall go in and out and find pasture.”

**10.** *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

I trust that the first purpose of Christ’s coming has been fulfilled to many of us, for we “have life” through him, but ought we not to be encouraged to hope that we may reach a higher standard of that life, and so have it more abundantly? We do not want to have just enough life to enable us to breathe, but we want life enough for usefulness, for joy, for triumph, for likeness to Christ, for communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

**11-13.** *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.*

Christ is the good Shepherd, and therefore he never fled as the hireling fleeth. He cared for the sheep, for they were his own. The wolf might come, but the good Shepherd was ready to meet him. He would not have his sheep scattered, but he would gather them in the cloudy and dark day, and in every time of danger he would be the center around which they might rally.

**14, 15.** *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

Our translators have spoilt this passage by putting a full stop where there should not be one, and by breaking it into two verses. It should run thus: "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." Christ here sets forth the intimate knowledge that there is between himself and all his people, — as much as there is between the Father and the Son. It is wonderful teaching, full of depth and spiritual power. As the Father knows the Son, and the Son knows the Father, so certainly does Christ know his Church, and his Church knows him, or shall do so in the future.

**16.** *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: —*

They are of this flock, but they are not of this fold. The flock is divided, and lies down in different fields for the present: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold:" —

**16-18.** *Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.*

Christ's death was to be the act of his own free will, as well as of the violence of wicked men.

**18-21.** *I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?*

Christ's sayings always cause a division between those who hear them. There must always be two opinions, just as there are some who are his sheep and some who are not. When you go and try to speak for Christ, do not be at all astonished if people ridicule you. What did they say of the Master himself? "He hath a devil, and is mad." They will not say any thing worse than that of you. And when they have said it, what does it matter? Hard words break no bones. So have courage enough to bear opposition, and you may, like your

Master, yet find some who will defend you, for there may be those who will say, "These are not the words of him that hath a devil."

**22-26.** *And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jesus round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.*

"You are not my chosen people; there has been no work of grace in your hearts, and therefore you do not believe." What a brave way that was of putting the truth." Some would have said, "Because you do not believe, you are not my sheep;" but Jesus puts it the other way, "Because you are not my sheep, therefore you do not believe."

**27-30.** *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.*

This great truth angered the Jews so much that they "took up stones again to stone him." They proved, by thus treating the good Shepherd, that they were not his sheep.

## **JOHN 10:1-30**

### **1.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you,*

Now we may be absolutely certain that there is something of the utmost importance wherever Christ uses the solemn asseveration of "Verily, verily," — the same word is "Amen, amen" and it has been well observed that if it were not for Christ's "Amens," our "Amens" would be of little value. It is because he who is the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, pleads in heaven that our "Amens" are accepted there. If, dear friends, Christ pays an earnest attention to our "Amens," how much more ought we to attend to his, specially when he doubles them — "Amen, amen, I say unto you."

**1-3.** *He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him*

*the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*

Here the people of God are compared to sheep. Their harmlessness and gentle character, their feebleness and quiet in the fold, their profitable uses, their defenseless state, requiring some one always to watch over them, the patience with which they are led to the shearer or to the slaughter, and the constancy with which they are associated with sacrifice, render sheep a most excellent symbol of the people of God. Doubtless the fold is the Church, within this fold all the saints of God are gathered, not always in the visible, but always in the invisible and indivisible Church of Christ. None may set up to be shepherds of this fold except those who come in a proper and fitting way, and that is not by a pretended apostolical descent, that is, not by a commission which they have received from their own assumption, but by a commission direct from Christ — coming in through him as by the door. The great true Shepherd, the antitype of all shepherds is Christ himself. To him the porter openeth. All the prophecies, which, like porters, kept the gates, opened at once to Christ; all godly hearts, which, like the porters of the gate, were watching for the coming of the true Shepherd, opened at once to Jesus; whether it were Anna or Simeon, they at once confessed him. The sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. We are told by Eastern travelers that in the large district folds into which the sheep-farmers put their different flocks, while they are all assembled in one common flock, the shepherd of any one flock has but to make his appearance and begin to speak, and his sheep at once recognize him. Though another person should dress up in his garments they would take no notice of him; they know their shepherd by his voice.

*4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*

The genius of the law is driving; the spirit of the Gospel is leading, and the joyful imitation follows.

*5. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.*

Heretics attract their companies, but the faithful followers of Christ never go after them. They cleave to the truth, which is the voice of Christ, and they will not be persuaded by the most

marvelous lying wonders, nor by the greatest arrogance, to depart from him who is their all.

**6-8.** *This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto ye, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.*

They made loud professions of being the true Messias, and some of them gathered great multitudes, and rebelled against the Roman power, but the true sheep, who waited for the true Shepherd, did not hear them.

**9-14.** *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*

This good Shepherd proves himself to be so by his actions. Remember, brethren, how carefully he watches his sheep from the tower of the flock, not one of them ever being absent from his eye for a single moment. How graciously he guides those sheep, leading them always by a right way that he may bring them to safety at the last. How plentifully doth he pasture his flock, making them to lie down in green pastures beside the still waters. And oh! how gloriously doth he defend his flock, dashing into the thickest of their foes, snatching the lamb out of the jaws of the lion and out of the paw of the bear. And we must not conclude this list of his deeds without remembering how readily he hath bought that flock, and how well he hath washed that flock, in blood flowing from his own veins, that he might present them all at the last, not one of them being wanting, nor one of them impure, but each of them like sheep that come up fresh from the washing. "I know my sheep." It is not as if salvation was left to haphazard. He knew them before they were created. Having foreordained he did foreknow. He knew them

when they did not know themselves, when they were wallowing in the mire like swine, he knew them still. He knows them now — unknown to fame, unregistered, perhaps, in the books of the visible Church “I know my sheep wherever they may be.” Then notice the next sentence, for this is the practical way by which you may judge whether you are his or not: “I am known of mine.” They know him as their only hope and trust, they know the sweetness of fellowship with him. They know the power of his arm, the efficacy of his blood, the faithfulness of his heart. They know the preciousness of his cross, and the glory of his crown.

**15-16.** *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*

No recognition of free-will here. Christ speaks as one who has the hearts of men in his control. He knows who are his that as yet are not called. He does not say he hopes they will yield to hear his voice, but they shall. Oh, irresistible grace, what can stand against thee? The blood-bought shall all be blood-washed; the foreordained and foreknown shall yet know him who hath saved them by his blood. In this we ought constantly to rejoice. The feebleness of the minister is no barrier to the carrying out of God’s purpose, nor is the hardness of the human heart any impediment to the completion of the divine decree. “Them also must I bring.” There is a heavenly necessity that all the chosen should be saved.

**17, 26.** *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil and is mad, why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the work that I do in my Father’s*

*name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.*

Believing does not make them sheep, but being sheep by divine election proves them to be such.

**27-30.** *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.*

Happy are they, then, who have received the character of sheep, for thus they prove themselves to be the chosen of God, and in the hand of Christ, and in his Father's grasp, they are eternally secure.

“If in my Father's love,

I share a filial part.

Send down thy Spirit like a dove

To rest upon my heart.”

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 10:1-30 AND HEBREWS 1:1-14.

## **JOHN 11:1-26**

**1.** *Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town or Mary and her sister Martha.*

In God's book, towns are most remarkable for saints that dwell in them. “The town of Mary and her sister Martha.” A day will come when a city shall be more illustrious for a saint than for a Caesar — be more renowned for deeds of faith than for deeds of battle. It was “the town of Mary and her sister Martha.”

**2, 3.** *(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick). Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*

They did not say anymore. They felt that it was quite enough to tell him that Lazarus was sick, and they left it to the tender heart of Jesus to do whatever seemed good in his sight. Some prayers would be all the better if they were shorter — all the better if they did not so much declare our own will as declare our confidence in the good will of Christ. I like the omissions of Martha's and Mary's prayer.

4. *When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*

Our Saviour sneaks in a different style from us. He should have said that the sickness was unto death, but, ultimately, to the glory of God. But he who sees the end from the beginning streaks with a grandeur of style which could not be imitated by us. So the Lord speaks of things, not as they seem to be, nor even as they are in the present moment, but as they shall be in the long run. "Not unto death, but that the Son of God might be glorified."

5. *Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.*

Yet Lazarus died. Jesus loved Lazarus, yet Lazarus was sick. Jesus was not of that cruel sort of people, of whom we have some in these days, who call themselves saints, and who attribute all sickness among God's people to their sin or to their want of faith. Not he. Here was one that was sick, but Jesus loved him just as much for all that.

6. *When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.*

Notice the connection. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus"; and yet when he had heard that Lazarus was sick, "he abode two days still in the same place where he was." Sometimes true love may think fit to make us wait. It may be the truest love on God's part to let us lie sick, and not to come post-haste to us to make us well. Ay, the truest love may demand that the sickness should turn to death, for out of the death he may bring the greater glory. The Lord acts not upon the scale of man, for he sees not as man sees. He sees the end as well as the beginning.

7. *Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.*

— and that because he loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. If that love in its wisdom made him tarry, yet that love in its sincerity at last moved him to seek the house of grief.

9. *Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?*

Is there not a time in which the sun will not go down — in which it is safe and right for men to work?

**9, 10.** *If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.*

There is a singular turn, is there not, in that expression? We expected it to be “Because he seeth not the light of the world,” instead of which the Saviour says, “Because there is no light in him” — because in spiritual things our light not only comes from above, but it shines within; and without that inner light we are sure to stumble.

**11.** *These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth: but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.*

It is the Saviour’s way to use terms concerning his miracles, which, so far from exaggerating them, even appear to depreciate them. He is about to raise a man from the dead, but he says, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.” I am afraid that our tendency is always to describe our actions in the largest possible terms consistent with truth; perhaps, sometimes forgetting those last words. But the Saviour describes truthfully what he does, but still in terms which, like his humanity, seem to veil the glory. Wonderfully condescending is it of him to speak thus:

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**12.** *Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.*

It is considered to be a sign of getting better when a patient can sleep.

**13-16.** *Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

A singular mixture of faith and unbelief. He so believes his Master that he is willing to die with him. He so doubts him that, although the Saviour had plainly told him that he was immortal till his work was done, yet he is afraid that his Master and all of them will be put to death. Oh, the Lord knows us better than we know ourselves, and the Lord accepts us notwithstanding our infirmities.

**17.** *Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.*

So that he was probably dead as soon as the messengers arrived to tell the Saviour that he was ill.

**18.** *Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.*

Just a nice little walk which our Saviour had often taken in the evening after the toils of the day in Jerusalem. He had loved to make Bethany his quiet resting-place. "Fifteen furlongs off."

**19-20.** *And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.*

Because she had not heard that Jesus was come, or else, no doubt, she would have been there as soon as Martha.

**21.** *Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*

They had often said to one another, "Oh, we wish the Lord were come." They had sent for him. They felt sure that he would come. But, alas, their brother had died before the Master had arrived; and now this thought which was uppermost in their hearts is uppermost in their speech, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

**22.** *But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.*

There is faith there, and there is unbelief too. She believes that Christ can have what he wills of God, but she does not recognize his own personal Godhead — his own power to work resurrection.

**23-26.** *Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*

She looked upon the resurrection and the life as things that were to be in some dim and misty future. "No," says Christ, "I am the resurrection and the life. Not only do I get these things by prayer

from God, but I am these things.” And then he goes on to explain it. He says, “I am the resurrection. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. I am the life. Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” He has taken her out of the thought of this poor common animal-life into the thought of the spiritual and higher life, which is, indeed, to the soul what the resurrection is to the body. It was well for the Saviour thus to teach her higher truth than as yet she knew.

### **JOHN 11:1-44**

**1.** *Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.*

To many people, it may have seemed an event of no particular importance that “a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany,” but great consequences often depend upon what appear to us to be very minor matters, and we must not despise the least of the Lord’s people, nor think slightingly of anything that concerns them. When a king or an emperor is ill, the news is published in all the papers; but when a friend of the Lord Jesus, a man “named Lazarus of Bethany,” was sick, that event was recorded in the Bible because of something very remarkable which was to follow that sickness. Lazarus was a son of God, and grace makes greater distinctions than earthly rank and worldly honours ever can make.

**2, 3.** *(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*

So you see that those whom Jesus loves may be themselves ill, or may have dear ones who are ill; ay, and the illness may be sent by God as a token and testimony of his affection for them. Men polish gems, but they do not take the trouble to polish common pebbles, and God sends affliction to his own beloved ones for their good and for his own glory.

**4.** *When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death,-*

That was not to be the end of it; God had quite another purpose in view in allowing Lazarus to be sick: “This sickness is not unto death,”-

*4. But for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*

Jesus knew that Lazarus would die, but he also knew that his death would only be a kind of interlude; the great design of God was not to take Lazarus home at that time, but to glorify his Son in the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead.

*5. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.*

Happy was the family at Bethany of which it could be said that all the members of it were dear to Christ. Is it so with your household, Martha? Or is it only Mary who is thus loved? Has Lazarus been left out? Then pray for your brother as these gracious sisters sent to tell Jesus about Lazarus.

*6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.*

We cannot always understand what our Master does. It seemed a strange thing that, when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he stopped where he was, yet there was a good reason for the delay, Christ was waiting in wisdom and in love. I think I see Mary and Martha, day after day wondering where Jesus could be; perhaps thinking hard thoughts of him, and saying, "He loved us, and he loved our brother, why did he not come directly we sent to him?"

*7-10. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.*

Christ felt that his day was not over, and that he could not die before his work was done, and therefore he did not fear the stones cast by unbelieving foes. So, my brother, at all risks go on with your God-given work; you will live through your twelve hours, and you will not live a moment longer. Be so much a believer in predestination that, even if duty calls you to risk your life, you will bravely do it, knowing that you are in the hands of God, and that your life cannot end until your appointed twelve hours have expired.

*11. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;-*

“Our friend.” Why, Lazarus was Christ’s friend. Yes; but those who are Christ’s friends are our friends too if we belong to Christ. I have recently met with a large number of persons from different countries; but, the moment we discovered that we loved the same Lord, we seemed to be as intimate as if we had been next-door neighbours for the last fifty years.

“Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;”-

*11-14. But I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spoke of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.*

Let me remind you, my dear brethren who preach the gospel, that you will have to preach very plainly, for you see that even the apostles could not understand a figure of speech. When Christ said, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth,” they mistook his meaning, so he had to say plainly, “Lazarus is dead.” That is how we must preach the gospel; not only so that our hearers can understand it, but so that they cannot misunderstand it.

*15, 16. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe, nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

Thomas always took a dark view of things, so he thought his Master was going to be killed; but he was a brave disciple, for he said to the other disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” There are still many very timid despondent disciples, but they cling to Christ, and, if necessary, they would die for him, as Thomas was willing to die with him. God bless you, Thomas! There are worse men than you, and not many better.

*17. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.*

You know that, in the East, they have to bury the dead almost immediately because of the heat of the climate; so that Lazarus was, not long after he was dead, put away in the family vault.

*18. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:*

An easy walk of somewhere about two miles.

**19, 20.** *And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.*

You will often hear people praising Mary at the expense of Martha, but although Mary is commended for sitting at Christ's feet, Martha here was the first to meet her Lord. The varying characters of different persons come out best at different times. Mary is best at sermon-time, she forgets the cups and the platters, but Martha is the more practical in the time of grief. She is active, and does not give way as Mary does. She is not so contemplative, and not so crushed as Mary is, so she is the first to go to meet her Lord.

**21.** *Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*

There seems to have been just a tinge of reproach in Martha's words, and Mary said exactly the same words to their dear Master and Friend a little later; and I have often heard Martha and Mary talk in this fashion: "Oh, if we had only had another doctor!" or, "If our dear friend had not gone to the seaside;" or, possibly, "If he had gone to the seaside, he might not have died." Well now, beloved friends, you have grief enough in having lost your relative or friend without adding to it by these unwise suppositions about what might have happened if you had done something else. Do not fall into that mistake and wound yourselves and grieve your best friend by unnecessary and useless regrets.

**22-24.** *But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*

She could not believe the joyful meaning that Christ meant to convey to her when he said, "Thy brother shall rise again."

**25.** *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection,-*

Note that our Lord did not say, "I am he who raiseth the dead;" but, "I am the resurrection,"-

**25-27.** *And the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I*

*believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.*

Will not many of you make Martha's grand confession of faith your own? Believe in Jesus, and then you will be able to believe anything and every thing that he says.

**28.** *And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*

Martha's title for Christ might be rendered, "The Teacher, The authoritative Teacher," yet I am glad our translators put it "The Master."

**29.** *As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.*

The coming of Christ had such an effect upon her that she arose from amid the ashes of her sorrow, and went out to meet her dear Lord and Master.

**30, 31.** *Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.*

It is significant that these mourners did not follow Martha when she went to meet Jesus, but they did follow Mary. Sometimes, sinners who are not converted by listening to one preacher, are blessed by the testimony of two. One sister may not be able to lead her brother to Christ yet God may enable two to do it. Jesus sent out his seventy disciples "two and two," and the apostles are usually mentioned in pairs,—Simon and Andrew, James and John, Phillip and Bartholomew and so on; and we shall find that two Christians can often accomplish what one alone could not do.

**32, 33.** *Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,*

His heart was full of sympathy; he felt the grief of these mourners, and sorrowed with them.

**34, 35.** *And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.*

In the original, a very blessed and expressive word is used here concerning Christ's weeping; quite a different word from that used to describe the weeping of Mary and the Jews. It should be a constant comfort to the sorrowing Church of God that "Jesus wept."

**36-39.** *Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.*

"Wilt thou expose that corrupt corpse to the air? "Ah, me! what poor foul creatures we are through the Fall! See what we may, any of us, become in a few days, so that even the one who loves us best will have to say of us, "Bury my dead out of my sight."

**40, 41.** *Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.*

That groaning in spirit was Christ's prayer to his Father, that inward tumult of his soul was his earnest supplication; and now he thanks his Father that he has heard him. Yet Lazarus was still dead, and lying, a mass of corruption, in the grave. Oh, for faith to bless God for the mercies that are on the way to us!

**42, 44.** *And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

See what wonders our Lord can work, and ask him to work similar miracles in the spiritual realm, and to raise to life those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

## JOHN 11:27-46

Our Lord's greatest miracles were ever the reward of faith.

**27.** *She saith unto him, Yea, Lord I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come unto the world.*

By which she as good as said, "I believe that, and I believe everything else. I have an implicit faith in thee. Whatever thou sayest, whatever thou hast said or shalt say, I am prepared to believe it all. for I believe in thee. I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

**28.** *And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly,*

Because she knew that the Jews hated the Saviour, she could not tell what would come of it if they knew of his coming, so she whispers to her:

**28-30.** *Saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was at that place where Martha met him.*

Their cemeteries were outside the town, and probably the Saviour was near the very grave where Lazarus slept.

**31-32.** *The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*

Her thought was just the same as the thought of Martha, but she did not say so much as Martha. She never did. Martha had a dialogue with the Saviour, but Mary bowed at his feet.

**33.** *When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord. come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave.*

Many have asked why Christ groaned. Why, brethren, it is the way in which he gives life — by his own death. We say sometimes of one who does a great action, “It took so much out of him.” So it did out of the Saviour. He must groan that Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus may rejoice. It is not without the stirring of his very life that he gives life to the dead.

**38-39.** *It was a cave and the stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone, Martha, the sister of him that was dead, said unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.*

“It were a pity to roll away the stone.”

**40-41.** *Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou has heard me.*

That is grand praying, is it not? Sometimes we ought to say, “Just so.” “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.”

**42-44.** *And I knew that thou hearest me always. but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he had thus spoken he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin.*

He probably slipped himself off from the ledge in the tomb upon which he been laid, and there he appeared before them bound so that he could not move farther.

### **JOHN 11:45-57**

Lazarus had been publicly raised from the dead. A great number of persons saw the miracle, and there was never any question about its having been wrought.

**45, 46.** *Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.*

We could hardly have conceived it possible that men would have been guilty of such conduct as this to post off to Christ's

enemies, and lay it as an accusation against him, that he had raised a man from the dead.

**47, 48.** *Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.*

They pretended that if Jesus Christ gathered to himself a great party, the Romans would take umbrage at it — pounce upon the whole nation and destroy it, for fear of its revolting from under their sway. A gross falsehood throughout.

**49, 50.** *And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all. Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, And that the whole nation perish not.*

That was his advice. You are, none of you, up to the mark. You do not handle this thing rightly. Let us kill this man. Let him be put to death — not that he deserves it, but that it is expedient that it should be, lest our nation should be destroyed; and this is the way that governors and kings have been accustomed to think — not “Is it right?” but “Is it expedient “and we may always pray to God that we may have a Government that will do that which is right, and not be guided by the evil direction of that which is expedient. One has well said that if the death of a righteous man would save ten thousand, yet it would be an atrocious thing that he should be put to death unwillingly for the saving of any. The right is, after all, expedient. Yet Caiaphas did not know what he said. He was speaking a great truth.

**51.** *And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation:*

He did not understand his own words. He was saying a great deal more than he meant to say — for it was expedient — blessedly expedient — that Jesus should die willingly and of his own accord, giving himself up to death for the sake of his people.

**52, 53.** *And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.*

One bold wicked man can often sway the counsels of men who are equally bad, but more cowardly. It had not yet come to this — that they would hurt him to the death; but now they take counsel to put him to death.

*54. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.*

We do not find that he wrought miracles there or preached, but in a holy and devout retirement, it may be, he prepared his mind for the last great week — the week of his passion and his death. It is generally best for us to imitate him in this; and when we have some great work to do — something that will need all the grace that we can get, it is well to make a retreat — get into retirement, and school the heart, and seek to drink in fresh strength that we may be prepared for that which lies before us.

*55, 56. And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?*

They had heard much of him in the country. Country people coming to town want to hear the great minister — to see the great Prophet: so that is their question, “Will he come to the feast?”

*57. Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him.*

They could not deny the miracle: they could arrest and punish the miracle-worker.

## **JOHN 12:1-7**

*1, 2. Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper;*

It was in the house of Simon the Leper; a near acquaintance, perhaps a relative of this beloved family, for we find that Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. The two families had coalesced for this festival, and well they

might, for one case someone had been healed of leprosy, and in the other case Lazarus had been raised from the dead. It was a holy, happy feast.

**2, 3.** *And Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus.*

The other evangelist said “anointed his head.” And they are both right. She anointed his head and his feet.

**3.** *And wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.*

Everybody perceived and enjoyed it, and understood what costly ointment it must be which loads the air with so delicate a perfume.

**4.** *Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should betray him.*

I wonder whether he was son of that Simon the Leper, and whether a spiritual leprosy did cleave to him. That, we know, was the case.

**5,6.** *Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.*

Observe that the sharpest critics of the works of good men are very often no better than they should be. This Judas is indignant with what Mary does, and claims that he cares for the poor, but all the while he is thief. Whenever a man is very quick, condemning gracious men and women, you may be quite as quick in condemning him. He is a Judas usually.

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 8:29-59. MARK 14:1-9. JOHN 12:1-7.

## **JOHN 12:1-8**

**1, 2.** *Then Jesus, six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper, and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.*

Martha served: she had not given that up. She was a wondrous housewife, and she did well to keep to her occupation. Lazarus had

been dead, and had been raised again. But he was not the center of interest: “He that raised him up was there.”

**3-7.** *Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.*

Somebody or other always seemed to object to Mary. If Martha does not do it, Judas will. To be found guilty of excess of love to Christ is such a blessed criminality that I wish we might be executed for it. It were sweet to be put to death for such a crime. It was that that Christ died of. He was found guilty of excess of love.

**8.** *For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.*

It is not every day that you can do something personally and distinctly for Christ himself, and therefore, whenever the occasion serves you be sure to be there to avail yourself of it. True, you can serve him indirectly by aiding his poor saints. Still, something for him — for him himself — should often be devised as Mary devised this service that day.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 63.; LUKE 10:38-42; AND JOHN 12:1-8.

## **JOHN 12:1-43**

**1.** *Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.*

The days Christ was to spend upon the earth were getting to be very few so he paid another visit to that Bethany home where he was always so welcome, and more so than ever since he had raised Lazarus from the dead.

**2, 3.** *There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed*

*the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.*

All the members of the re-united family were present, Martha busy as usual with the domestic duties which fell to her share, Lazarus in close attendance upon the Master who had wrought so great a miracle upon him, and Mary in her own sweet and gracious way pouring out the wealth of her affection in honour of the Master.

**4 -6.** *Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.*

The question of Judas was a most unworthy one, but the motive that prompted the question was worse still. Little did he care for the poor; but if he could have had the selling of that very costly ointment of spikenard, he would have made that an opportunity of enriching himself.

**7, 8.** *Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you: but me ye have not always.*

Christ was himself ever caring for the poor, so he would not discourage any effort on their behalf, but just then, one of his most devoted disciples desired to render to him special honour, and he would not let her be rebuked; but on the contrary, he pointed out the deep symbolical meaning of her loving action.

**9.** *Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.*

Their curiosity was but natural, for few of them could have seen anyone who had been raised from the dead. It is well when a saved soul, who has been spiritually raised from the dead, becomes a center of attraction together with the Lord who has wrought such a miracle of mercy upon him.

**10, 11.** *But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.*

They would have committed a double murder if it had been possible, and would have put to death both Jesus and Lazarus, who was a living witness to the wonder-working power of the Christ whom they would not receive as the promised Messiah. When men hate Christ, they also hate those whom he has blessed, and will go to any lengths in seeking to silence their testimony.

**12, 13.** *On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

It is significant that John is the only one of the four Evangelists who mentions the palm fronds that were carried by the people in this triumphal procession in honour of Christ, and it was to John that the vision was given of the “great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,” who “stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

**14-16.** *And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.*

It is strange that Christ's own disciples did not at once remember this plain prophecy when it was so literally fulfilled, yet, before we condemn them, let us recollect how “slow of heart” we also have been “to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”

**17.** *The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.*

They could not help testifying in his favor after they had seen him work such a notable miracle as the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

**18, 19.** *For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among*

*themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.*

When they saw our Lord riding in state through the streets, and the people waving palm branches and shouting in his honour, they said, "The world is gone after him." That was only very partially true, and for a very short time; but the day will come when the whole world shall go after him Christ's divine attractions shall be felt throughout the earth, and all the Pharisees then in the world will not be able to prevent the people from going after him; and-

"Come what may To stand in the way That day the world shall see."

**20, 21.** *And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.*

They were proselytes, who had learned to worship Jehovah. Something more than mere curiosity must have moved them to want to see Jesus. Having heard of his raising the dead, they had a desire, and a very proper desire, to know more of him, so they asked to be introduced to him by one who, though not a Greek, had a Greek name, and who may therefore have served as a kind of bridge for these Greeks to reach the Saviour.

**22, 23.** *Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.*

Christ's passion and death were getting very near when these Gentiles came to him, and he saw, in that company of Greeks, the vanguard of that great army that shall yet come to him out of every nation under heaven. In the prospect of that great ingathering, he looked beyond the impending shame and suffering, and spoke even of the hour of his death as the time when he should be glorified.

**24.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

This was Christ's way to glory, and it must be our way to glory too. The grain of wheat must fall into the ground, and die, or else it cannot bring forth fruit. Just so must it be with you and with me, and

in proportion as we learn to die to self we shall live to the glory of God.

**25.** *He that loveth his life shall lose it.*

If you keep yourself to yourself, you will lose yourself.

**25.** *And he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*

Brethren and sisters in Christ, if we are really to glorify Christ on the earth, we must be willing to lose our reputation, our good name, our comfort, and indeed everything that we have, for Christ's sake. This is the only way truly to live. If, for your own sake, you begin to keep back anything from Christ, that is the way to die. You would then be like the grain of wheat that is laid by, and preserved, and which, therefore, can never grow or multiply. Surrender yourself; be willing to be nothing; be willing to die if only the truth may live. Care nothing about honour and glory for yourself; care only about the honour and glory of your Master. Learn the meaning of the Master's paradox. As you bury yourself, you will multiply yourself. As you are put out of sight, like a grain of wheat that is sown in the ground, you have your only opportunity of growth and increase; heavily-laden ears of corn shall spring up from the grain which has been buried in the earth.

**26-28.** *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.*

In the 27<sup>th</sup> verse, our Saviour asked himself the question, "What shall I say?" here he gives his own answer, "Father, glorify thy name." When you know not what to pray for, you can always safely pray, "Father, glorify thy name." As you stand where the cross-roads meet, and you ask, "Which way shall I choose?" pray, "Father, glorify thy name." This incident seems like a rehearsal of Christ's passion. Here we see that natural fear of death which came across the Saviour's mind because he was so really and truly man. If his pains had not been real pains, but had been pleasant and congenial to him, there would have been no self-sacrifice in his suffering; but the fact that they cast upon his spirit the dark shadow of death only proves to us what sharp pains they were; but instead of

asking for a way of escape from them, he surrendered himself to them, gave himself up as a willing victim with this prayer upon his lips, "Father, glorify thy name." And now see what happened.

**28, 29.** *Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.*

This was one of the three occasions on which testimony was openly borne to Christ by his Father; first at his baptism, then at his transfiguration, and now here at the rehearsal of his great sacrifice. We learn, from this narrative, that the voice of God is not understood by everybody. Some of those that stood by said that it thundered, and others said that an angel spake to him. It is necessary that you should be a child of God if you are to know your Father's voice. Though God is speaking, at this moment in the clearest tones, none will recognize his voice, or understand his words, but those who are taught by his Holy Spirit.

**30, 31.** *Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

See how the eye of faith reads things differently from the eye of sense. You and I would have said, "Now is Christ coming to his lowest point. Now is his name to be cast out from among men, and his cause to be crushed as the result of his death." But Christ reads the signs of the times very differently. "Now," saith he, "in the hour of my shame, and suffering, and death, is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." It was only by Christ being apparently conquered that Satan could be really vanquished, and there is often no way of victory for a saint except through defeat. When self is slain, then do we truly live.

**32, 33.** *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.*

The Pharisees said, "The world is gone after him;" but Jesus says, "No not while I am riding in state through the streets of Jerusalem; but when I am lifted up, and hung upon the cross, then shall it indeed be true, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.'" The crucified Christ of Calvary is the mighty magnet that is to attract multitudes of trembling, doubting, ruined

sinner, who by grace shall be drawn unto him, and find eternal life in him.

**34, 35.** *The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*

What a sad condition to be in, not to know where you are going! Are there not some of you, whom I am now addressing, who do not know where you are going? Yet, if you would but take the trouble to look, you might easily know that, so long as you continue in the paths of sin, you are going down to the chambers of death. Oh, that God's Holy Spirit would give you sufficient light to enable you to see where you are going! You surely do not want to take "a leap in the dark." Oh, that you may have the grace to turn from the downward way, and to seek the heavenward road!

**36-41.** *While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*

You know that wonderful sixth chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, and you know how wonderfully he has spoken there of the glory of Christ; but what a terrible thing it is that even Christ should be driven to blind men's eyes, to take the light away from them because they proved themselves unworthy of it! May that never be the case with any of us; but while we may see, let us see; and may God give us more light!

**42, 43.** *Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they*

*should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

What a shameful thing that was! Yet you will still find that there are many persons who, even though they believe the truth, dare not own it, but must hide in obscurity until the times grow easier. However, Christ's death fetched out many who had been his disciples in secret. Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus could not keep in the background any longer and, doubtless, the thoughts of many other hearts were then revealed.

### **JOHN 12:12-36**

**12-15.** *On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion · behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.*

Even in the little glory of a temporal kind, which was given to the Lord Jesus Christ when he was "here among men" as Mrs. Luke's hymn puts it, his humility and meekness were very manifest, thus fulfilling the prophecy recorded in Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Oh, that all his people would always be of such a lowly spirit, not seeking great things for themselves, but condescending to men of low estate, remembering that it was their Master who said to his disciples, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

**16.** *These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.*

I wonder whether, when Christ comes back to earth, in the glory of his Father with the holy angels, we also shall not understand a great many things which are complete mysteries to us now. Peradventure, it will be said of us then, "These things understood

not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.” That first glory of his ascension to heaven shed a flood of light upon the life of Christ, as doubtless the greater glory of his second advent will shed a yet brighter light upon our understanding of the things of Christ which quite surpass our comprehension now.

**17-19.** *The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.*

No doubt many of his disciples thought so too, yet how mistaken were both the friends and the foes of Christ, for you recollect, brothers and sisters, that Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem was followed, within less than a week, by a far different scene, when the same crowd that cried “Hosanna!” shouted “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” The world, that was supposed to have gone after him, nailed him to the cross; so short-lived is human popularity. So short-lived also is the admiration of Christ by carnal minds, for they do admire him after a fashion, they cannot help doing so. There have been written lives of Christ, which have been full of admiration of him, yet equally full of opposition to his Deity. We must not always regard it as an encouraging sign when men praise Christ; for very soon, if the root of the matter be not in them, and they do not accept him as their Lord and Master, they will change their note, and instead of “Hosanna!” it will be “Away with him, crucify him!”

**20, 21.** *And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir we would see Jesus.*

I do not know why these Greeks went to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, unless it was because he had a Greek name. Yet Andrew and Peter also had Greek names. If I went to Paris, and wanted to see the President, and knew that there was somebody in the cabinet who had an English name, I should probably say, “Well,

either he is an Englishman, or he comes of English parentage, so he may take an interest in me, and get me the introduction I want.” Perhaps that was the reason why these Greeks came to Philip. I cannot think of any other; but I know that, if you want to get to Christ, you will always find some way of doing it, and that the reason why so many people do not get to him, is because they do not want to do so. You may all come to Jesus Christ if you will. But, alas! until his grace controls it, and changes it, your will inclines you to stay further away from Christ rather than to come to him.

**22.** *Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.*

Andrew and Philip appear to have been staunch friends and fellow-labourers; and it is always well when Christian men can work for Christ with congenial companions. My poor perplexed brother, if you cannot get to Jesus Christ by yourself, it will be a good thing for you to say to some Philip, “Sir, I would see Jesus.” Perhaps Philip will tell his friend Andrew, and then Philip and Andrew will go together, and tell Jesus, and so you will get to him. It is a great help in prayer, when you are yourself unable to pray, to get someone, whom you know to be a Christian, and who has sympathy with you, to come and pray with you.

**23, 24.** *And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, —*

“Amen, amen,” —

**24, 25.** *I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit He that loveth his life shall lose it;*

Or, as it should be rendered, “He that loves his life loses it “ That is not the true way to live; and in his selfish attempt to live to himself, he is losing his life.

**25, 26.** *And he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me;*

The best service you can render to Christ is to imitate him. If you want to do what will please him do as he did.

**26.** *And where I am, there shall also my servant be:*

You cannot expect better lodgings than that; so, as Christ had to live here amid sorrow, and sin, and shame, you must be willing to

do the same; but, as Christ was afterwards exalted to indescribable honour, so shall it be with you if you are his true servant

**26.** *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

For such is the Father's love to his Son, that he delights to honour all those who become his Son's faithful servants.

**27.** *Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.*

There was a conflict in the Saviour's heart, — the weakness of his true manhood — striving with the strength of his infinite affection to his people, and also to his Father. We must never forget that He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." If it had been no pain to him to die as the Substitute for sinners, there would have been no atoning sacrifice in his death; and if no dread had overtaken him at the thought of death, it would have proved that he did not die as we do; and, therefore, he would not have been able to take our place as he did. Notice how the Saviour speaks of the struggle that was going on in his soul. "What shall I say?" Do you ever have to ask that question when you are trying to pray? If so, do not be astonished, for even your Lord and Master said the same. "What shall I say?" — as if he paused to consider what form his prayer should take, — "shall I say, Father save me from this hour? No; but I will say, For this cause came I unto this hour."

**28.** *Father, glorify thy name.*

That is a grand answer to the Saviour's question, "What shall I say?" And, when you do not know how to pray, you may always present that petition, "Father, glorify thy name." You have some dear one at home very ill; you would be glad if the precious life might be spared, yet you are not sure whether you may ask for it? Well then, say, "Father, glorify thy name." Possibly, you are passing through a great trial, and you would be glad to escape from it; yet you do not know whether it is the divine will that you should do so. Well then, you may, at any rate, put up this prayer, "'Father, glorify thy name.' Whatever is most for thy glory, let that be my will as it is thy will."

**28** *Then came there a voice from heaven, —*

An audible voice, for those who stood by could hear it: "There came a voice from heaven," —

**28-30.** *Saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.*

“You needed to be strengthened as to the divine character and authority of my mission; you required to be comforted with the full assurance that I shall indeed be glorifying my Father even when I die upon the cross of Calvary.”

**31.** *Now is the judgment of this world:*

This is a wonderful sentence, — as if, in Christ’s death, the world was judged, and condemned; and so it was; nothing ever so convicted the world of high treason against God as when men said of the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s well-beloved Son, “This is the Heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.” The shedding of the blood of Christ upon the cross is the crimson evidence of the deep transgression of human nature: “Now is the judgment of this world.” There is another rendering of this text, retaining the Greek word, “Now is the crisis of this world

**31.** *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

Thank God for that! His throne was shaken to its fall when Christ died on Calvary. All the powers of darkness suffered eternal defeat in the hour that men and devils fancied they had gained the victory.

**32, 33.** *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.*

Yet they did not understand it, even then, clear as it now appears to us that he spake concerning his lifting up upon the cross.

**34-36.** *The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayeth thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.*

## JOHN 12:19-43

Our Lord raised Lazarus from the dead; and this miracle made a great sensation among the people. They came to meet Jesus, waving palm branches before him, and all Jerusalem was on a stir.

**19-22.** *The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.*

These were probably Gentiles, who were staying at Jerusalem; perhaps, proselytes who had come up to the feast. They were touched by the common feeling; they desired to see this wonderful Man who had raised to life one who had been dead four days. They proceeded courteously; they went to one of Christ's disciples who, coming from Galilee of the Gentiles, would be likely to sympathize with them, and they sought an introduction to Jesus. This Philip obtained for them with the help of Andrew.

**23.** *And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.*

He knew that the hour was come when he must die. Looking through the dark glass of death, he saw what its result would be, and he called it glory. These few Greeks were the advance guard of the great Gentile army of the Lord; he regarded their coming in that sense.

**24.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

Telling them that the source of his glory would be his death. The reason why the people would hear of him, and come to him, was that he would be hanged on the cross. The grain of wheat, when put into the ground, if it remains as it is, will never increase; it must die if it is to bring forth fruit. What is death? The end of existence? None but thoughtless persons imagine that. Death is the resolution of any living substance into its primary elements. It is the division of the soul from the body; originally, it was the division of the soul from God. In a grain of wheat, death is the separation of the

particles of which it is composed, that the life-germ may feed upon that which was provided for it. "If it die," in the true sense of the word, in being separated into its constituent elements, then "it bringeth forth much fruit." Christ's way to glory was through the grave he must go down that he might mount to the throne.

**25.** *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*

Live for this world, and you shall lose this world and the next, too; live for the world to come, and you shall in the highest sense gain both worlds.

**26.** *If any man serve me, let him follow me;*

That is the best kind of service; to do what Christ did, and to do what Christ bids you do: "If any man serve me, let him follow me."

**26.** *And where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

Follow Christ, then, to the cross; follow him to the grave; follow him in his humiliation; and then the Father will honour you even as he honoured his Son.

**27.** *Now is my soul troubled;*

Or, puzzled. This hour of his glory was the hour of his passion, too.

**27.** *And what shall I say?*

Such sorrow was in his heart that he asked, "What shall I say?" Great trouble brings astonishment, amazement, bewilderment with it; and the human soul of Christ felt as ours feels when in great agony.

**27.** *Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.*

Nature suggests the cry, "Father, save me from this hour." Grace comes behind the flesh, being a little slower to speak; but it corrects the errors of the flesh, and says, "For this cause came I unto this hour."

**28.** *Father, glorify thy name.*

What a prayer! Jesus swallows up his temptation to escape the cup by this all-absorbing petition, "Father, glorify thy name."

**28, 29.** *Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered:*

They only heard the sound, and it was like thunder in their ears.

**29.** *Others said, An angel spoke to him.*

They distinguished the sound of some one speaking; but they did not recognize the voice of God.

**30.** *Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.*

“To make you believe that God is with me, and that I am his Son.”

**31-34.** *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?*

As if it could not be true that Christ, in his divine nature, abides for ever, and yet, as Man, could be lifted up to die. It was a sneering question, “Who is this Son of man?” Our Lord did not answer it, thus teaching us that some people are not worth answering. Instead of replying to their question, Jesus gave them a practical admonition.

**35, 36.** *Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.*

When people determine to reject Christ, he leaves them; why should he tarry where he is rejected? He “departed, and did hide himself.”

**37-41.** *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,*

*He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*

Christ is in the Old Testament in many places where, as yet, even we have never seen him. I doubt not that he lies hidden away in many a Psalm, and many a prophetic utterance that has not yet been fully expounded, or even comprehended by our finite minds. Oh, for eyes to see him where he sits in his ancient state: What a solemn fact this is, though, that God does allow men to be given over to blindness of eyes and hardness of heart! I sometimes fear that it is so with this age. Men will not see; they will not believe; they are desperately set on skepticism. It has become a fashion with them. Like a torrent, it sweeps through the very churches that bear the name of Christ. My fear is God in his wrath may give up our land to this curse, and then where will our hope be?

**42, 43.** *Nevertheless among the chief riders also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than, the praise of God.*

I wonder whether in this throng there are any of this kind, who do believe in Christ, and yet never come out and confess him because they love the praise of men more than the praise of God. If so, I venture to say that they are found among what are called the more respectable people, the men of light and leading, the chief rulers. Among the common people there is very little of this evil. They will generally confess what they believe, and bravely come forward to declare that they belong to Christ. It is the chief rulers, the gentlemen of the Sanhedrim, who, if they believe in Christ in their hearts, do not confess him, lest they should be put out of society, for they love the praise of men more than the praise of God.

## **JOHN 12:20-41**

Our Lord had raised Lazarus from the dead, and this miracle had excited great attention in Jerusalem. In consequence of this, the people had led him in triumph through the streets, and everywhere there was great excitement. Everybody was speaking of the wonderful miracle which he had wrought.

**20, 21.** *And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.*

There is no doubt that these men were Gentiles, — probably proselytes. They had come up to worship at the feast, and their curiosity had been excited, and their interest had been awakened, by what they had seen and heard about Jesus. There appears to have been at least some measure of reverence for him in their minds. Hence they addressed one of his disciples, whose purely Greek name may lead us to suppose that he had some Greek relatives. They said to Philip, “Sir, we would see Jesus.”

**22, 23.** *Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.*

They did not expect him to say that. Surely, the coming of a few Greeks to see him was not very much in the way of glorification. But, to him, the coming of these Greeks was a sort of prophecy of the myriads of other Gentiles who would, by-and-by, come to his feet; and, therefore, he looked forward to that death which should be the means of their salvation. Christ came into the world to preach the gospel, but he came on a greater errand than that, namely, to provide a gospel that could be preached; and he knew that the time was approaching when he must provide that gospel by dying upon the cross. See how he proceeds: —

**24.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

The preservation of the corn is the prevention of its increase; but the putting of it into the ground, the losing of it, the burial of it, is the very means of its multiplication. So our Lord Jesus Christ must not care for himself, and he did not. He surrendered himself to all the ignominy of the death of the cross, he died, and was buried in the heart of the earth, but he sprang up again from the grave, and ever since then myriads have come to him through his death, even as these Greeks came to him in his life. Now, as it was with Christ, so is it to be with us; at least, in our measure.

**26.** *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in, this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*

His love is ruinous to his true life; but to destroy self-love, to make a sacrifice of ourselves, is the truest way really to preserve ourselves.

**26, 27.** *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.*

This seems to be a sort of rehearsal of the dread scene soon to be enacted in Gethsemane. At the sight of these Greeks, our Saviour seems to have been led specially to think, as we have already said, of that death by which they, and multitudes like them were to be redeemed. Thinking of it, he enters so fully into it, by a sort of foretaste, that he feels something of the same shiver and throe of anguish which came upon him in Gethsemane. He seems to say here, "Father, save me from this hour," just as he said there, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Yet he says here, "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name," — just as he afterwards said in the garden, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

**28, 29.** *Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, an angel spake to him.*

This was the third time that mysterious voice had been heard; — first, at his baptism; the second time, on the Mount of Transfiguration; and, now a few days before he died upon the cross. The voice of God had been heard on a much earlier occasion, — at Sinai; and then it was attended with thunder, as it was here. Those who had not ears to understand the voice of God only perceived the loudness of its thunder peals; but there were others, like John himself, who understood what the Lord said: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

**30, 31.** *Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

The old Roman empire seemed to stand as fast as the eternal hills, but God had come to judge the whole state of affairs as it was then in the world; and, inasmuch as Christ the pure and perfect Son of God was condemned to die, that action condemned the society of that period. Yea, the whole of the ungodly world, in taking its part in crucifying Christ, bore evidence against itself, and pronounced sentence upon itself as being guilty of the death of the Christ of God. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." The overthrow of the usurper began from that time, and that overthrow of the devil is still going on; and, blessed be God, it will reach its completion one of these days, and we shall yet rejoice in a new heaven, and a new earth, on which the trail of the serpent shall never be traced.

**32.** *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

Christ on the cross draws all men up to himself. I have heard this text quoted as if it referred to Christ being extolled in preaching. Well, it is true that, when Christ is lifted up in the ministry, there is an attractive power; but that is not the first meaning of the text. Let us read on: —

**33.** *This he said, signifying what death he should die.*

He alluded to his crucifixion, which is the great attractive center of mankind.

**34-35.** *The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.*

It is always well to use the light that we already have. If any man will use the light he already has, God will be sure to give him more. That is a good saying of an old Puritan, "If thou hast starlight, thank God for it, and he will give thee moonlight; and when thou hast moonlight, give thanks to God for it, and he will give thee sunlight." And so it shall be. Nothing is worse than sinning against light. If it is only the light of conscience, even if you know it is not perfect, yet, nevertheless, never sin against it; for, if you do—you will quench it, and to quench the light you have, is the way to effectually prevent

your having any more: “While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.”

**36-41.** *These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*

There is such a thing as judicial blindness. If men can see, and yet will not see, God is at last so provoked by their wickedness that he takes away the light altogether, and removes from them the very faculty of sight. It is not surprising that it should be so, for it was so with the generation in which Christ lived. They had so long rejected the true prophet, — so long refused to listen to the voice of God, that, at last, he abandoned them to their own ways; and nothing worse can happen to a man than to be abandoned of God. If God casts thee off, thou art lost indeed.

## **JOHN 12:20-50**

**20-24.** *And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

I think that our Saviour looked upon these Greeks as a sort of vanguard of the great army of Gentiles who would come to him as the result of his death; but he fixed his eye upon the cause rather than the result, and so he began to talk about that death of his, and how it was that it would work such glorious results. If you want a corn of wheat to grow, you must put it into the ground; it must be

resolved into its primary particles, -for that is what “to die” means, -and then it must spring up again with newness of life, or else it can never be multiplied. It was so with the Lord Jesus himself; it is still so with us, it is in proportion as we ourselves shall be prepared to die that we shall be prepared to give life to others.

**25.** *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*

To hoard your energies will be really to destroy them, like hoarded wheat which in the end becomes useless; but to give up your energies, to expend your life-forces, this is to sow the wheat, and this is the way to ensure the harvest.

**26.** *If any man serve me, let him follow me;*

Do not let him invent some new method of service: “Let him follow me.” If you would do Christ a service, it cannot be by will-worship, or by any way of your own devising: “If any man serve me, let him follow me.”

**26.** *And where I am, there shall also my servant be:*

“He shall be with me in tribulation; he shall be with me in humiliation; but he shall ultimately be with me in triumph and in glory.”

**26.** *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

Those servants of Christ who follow at their Master’s heel, and do his bidding at all times, are the true knights of the King who win the honours that God alone can give.

**27.** *Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.*

Often, my brethren, should we be checked in prayer if we would be as wise as our Lord. “What shall I say? Shall I ask to be delivered from sickness? Shall I ask that I may not endure the troubles, which are the common lot of men? Shall I pray to be screened from persecution?” You see, I am rendering our Lord’s question into our language, bringing it down from the lofty height of his divine thought to the level of our poor humanity. We must often pause before we pray, and say with our Lord, “For this cause came I unto this hour. Have I not been brought here on purpose to suffer? Have I not been led to this place that I may glorify God by submitting to all his will?” Therefore, sometimes let us check ourselves in prayer,

lest we should ask what is not for our own good or for God's glory. The next word of the Saviour will give us liberty enough, for he went on to say,-

**28.** *Father, glorify thy name.*

When we are pleading about that glorious name of Jehovah, we may pray with vehemence and importunity: "Father, whatever I do or suffer, glorify thy name."

**28, 29.** *Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.*

Ah! they did not understand the voice of God, or the cause of the voice speaking to them. If the men of the world in our Saviour's day did not understand the Father's voice to the Only Begotten, do not expect that the men of the world today will understand the divine voice in your heart. They will reckon that you are in error, and that God has not spoken to you; it has only thundered. They will be ready to invent all kinds of stories of angels, and I know not what, so as to get rid of the voice of God to you. But you know it; if you are God's children, you know his voice, and you also know what he means when he speaks.

**30-32.** *Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

This is the sermon, which has the Greeks for a text. They are already coming, being drawn to Christ: but when he dies, when he is lifted up upon the cross, instead of losing his attractive power, he will have greater drawing force than ever: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

**33, 34.** *This he said, signifying what death he should die. The people answered him,*

As they were always doing, capaciously answering; not answering to him with sentiments that responded to his, but replying against him with their caviling.

**34-41.** *We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this*

*Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*

It is an awful thing to resist the Spirit of God, for if his softening influences are withdrawn, the heart grows hard; if his enlightening influences are taken away, the eyes of the understanding are darkened. I do believe there are many who have so long trifled with conscience and violated the best instincts of their nature that they are given up as those who are past hope. I pray God that it may not be so with any here; but it was so with many in the generation amongst which Christ laboured.

**42.** *Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him;*

Christ has his secret followers in the darkest days. There are men who believe in him even when the current of infidelity runs most strongly.

**42, 43.** *But because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

For which they deserved great censure. Yet some of them cast away their cowardice at the last, for Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus were among those who confessed their love to the crucified Christ.

**44-49.** *Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world,*

*but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.*

Christ did not pride himself upon being a great original thinker. He took his word from his Father's mouth; and the preacher of the gospel is to be no inventor of new thoughts. The "thoughtful" man of whom we hear so much is just a man who is rebellious against God. The Lord's true servant is to repeat God's thoughts, not his own, to borrow from the Scriptures, to borrow from the teaching of the Holy Ghost, even as the Lord Jesus Christ did.

**50.** *And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*

If the great Head of the Church was thus only a messenger, the deliverer of a message from the Father, should not we, who at our best are such poor ministers of Christ, take heed to it that we also can say, "Even as the Father said unto me, so I speak"? God grant it! Amen.

## **JOHN 12:20-50**

Our Lord had gained a sudden popularity through raising Lazarus from the dead, and the people had attended him with great enthusiasm as he rode through the streets of Jerusalem. For the time, things looked very bright with him, but he knew that he was soon to suffer and to die, and the overshadowing of that great eclipse was already upon his heart. Note how he looked forward to it, and how he spake concerning it.

**20-22** *And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.*

Probably these persons were proselytes to the Jewish faith. They had renounced their idols, and they had come to worship the only true God; and now they had a wish to see Jesus,-not out of idle

curiosity, but because they felt a certain degree of respect for him. They wanted to know more of his teaching, and to learn whether he was indeed the promised Messiah. The disciples encouraged these seekers; they would not have brought mere curiosity-mongers to their Master, but they saw that there was something better in these Greeks; so they consulted together, and their opinion was that they must tell Jesus about them.

**23.** *And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come that the Son of man should be glorified.*

He was about to die, yet he speaks of his death as being glorified. For the joy that was set before him, he seems to overlook the intervening humiliation in the prospect of the glory that would come of it through the salvation of multitudes of strangers from the very ends of the earth. He looks on these Greeks as the vanguard of a great army of Gentiles who would continue to come to him, and pay him homage. Hear what he says next:-

**24.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

He knew that he must die, for his living, and preaching, and miracle working would never produce such results as his death would accomplish. He must go down into the ground, out of sight, and there must lie like a buried grain of wheat, that out of him there might spring a great harvest to the glory of God; and these Greeks were like a first handful, a wavesheaf unto God, a promise of the great harvest that would be the result of his death: "If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

**25, 26.** *He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

It is an honour to be allowed to serve Christ, but God will bestow still further honour upon those who faithfully serve him.

**27-29.** *Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people*

*therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.*

How ready they were to find an explanation for that “voice from heaven” which they could not comprehend! Some “said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.” But here is Christ’s own interpretation of the mystery:--

**30, 31.** *Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

Satan may have thought that he had triumphed when Christ was crucified, but that death upon the cross was the death-blow to the devil’s usurpation.

**32, 33.** *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.*

There is no magnet like the death of Christ. He is able still to draw men unto him because of the attractive force of his atoning sacrifice.

**34-36.** *The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.*

At first sight, this may not seem to have been an answer to their question, “Who is this Son of man?” Yet it was a very direct answer, for he was “the Light of the world;” and as the light was soon to be withdrawn from them, there was all the greater need of Christ’s injunctions, “Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.”

**37-41.** *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,*

*He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*

Isaiah was sent upon a painful errand, to tell the people that they should hear, but they should not understand; that they should see, but they should not perceive; and so it happened to Israel as a nation, and to this day Israel rejects the true Messiah. Oh, that none of us may imitate their evil example by negligence and contempt of the revelation of God, lest after playing with Scripture, and trifling with the Christ of God, the Lord should at last in anger declare that we should see, but should not perceive, that we should hear, but should not understand.

**42, 43.** *Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

Are there any here who believe in Christ, but who have never confessed him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, and lose the praise of men? Are you afraid of your family, your father, or your husband; or is there some friend who would be angry with you if you confessed Christ? If so, be no longer such a coward, I pray you, but come out boldly, and confess him who will not be ashamed to confess you before his Father and the holy angels.

**44-50.** *Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my word, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself, but thy Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*

## **JOHN 12:37-50**

**37.** *But though he had done so many miracles before then, yet they believed not on him.*

They had an opportunity of seeing with their eyes; what the Christ could do. He had even raised the dead in the midst of them, and yet this is the sorrowful statement.

**38-40.** *That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.*

This passage is very frequently quoted in the Old Testament: it was so exceedingly apropos to the condition of the unbelieving Jews. They were wilfully blinded. They could see it; they were forced to hear it; there was much that even touched their hearts; but they hardened their heart against it, and to this day they remain the same.

**41-43.** *These things said Esaias, when he was his glory, and spake of him. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

And this is a common disease to this day. There are many who know the truth, who, nevertheless, keep very quiet about it. They do not like to be despised; they cannot endure to seem to be separate from their fellowmen; it is not respectable to be decided for Christ, and to come out from among them, so they love the praise of men more than the praise of God.

**44.** *Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.*

Faith in Christ is faith in God, he that trusts the Son hath accepted the witness of the Father.

**45.** *And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.*

Wonderful expression. Perhaps, we never fully realize it. Christ is seeable. God is not, but when we see the Christ, we do virtually

see all of God that we may desire to see: the Invisible hath made himself visible in Christ — in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

**46.** *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.*

True faith in Christ sheds light on everything concerning which light is desirable. You shall understand things when you have come unto the right standpoint, when you have gotten to believe in Christ. I wonder not that those who doubt concerning him, doubt about everything; if they will not have this light, how shall they see?

**47.** *And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for came not to judge the world, but to save the world.*

Under this present dispensation, it is not the time of judgment. The Lord leaves you that are unbelievers to yourselves. He does not come as yet to judge you; there is a second coming, when he will be both judge and witness, and condemner, of those who have rejected him; but at present it is a dispensation of pure mercy. “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him.” There is a great God above who reckons this to be among the greatest of all human crimes, that they reject his Son. We speak of unbelief very lightly, and there are some who trifle with it as if it had no moral quality at all, but God doth not so.

**48.** *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*

Look, ye, to that, the gospel which you refuse will judge you at the last day. We know that the Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the world, saith Paul, “according to my gospel,” and he that sins against the gospel of love will certainly involve himself in the most solemn condemnation. He perishes that sins against the law, he dieth without mercy at the mouth of one or two witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy that sins against love, and rejects the Saviour?

**49.** *For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.*

God at the back of Christ. Omnipotence supporting love. The expostulations of Christ, not left to our will to do as we like with them, but solemnly sanctioned by the royalties of God, so that to refute them is treason against the majesty of heaven.

**50.** *And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*

The eternal authority of God is at the back of the testimony of Christ. Oh! that men would not be so unwise as to reject it Now in our reading at the 41<sup>st</sup> verse we met with these words: “These things, said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him.” Now let us read the passage which gives us an account of Isaiah’s seeing the glory of Christ.

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 12:37-50; ISAIAH 6. JOHN 12:37-50.

### **JOHN 13:1-17**

**1.** *Now before the feast of the passover, —*

Or, just as it was about to begin, —

**1.** *When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

That is a very beautiful description of Christ’s death: “His hour was that he should depart out of this world unto the Father,” — just as though he was merely going on a journey, leaving one land for another; and if this be a fair description of such a stormy passage as that of our Lord Jesus, who died for our sins upon Calvary’s cross, it must with equal truth describe the death of any of the children of God. There is also an appointed time for us to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better than remaining here. The loosing of the cable, the spreading of the sail, the crossing over the narrow sea, the coming to the eternal haven, and the abiding there, — what Christian heart needs to dread this? How much better is it even to look forward to it with ardent anticipation! Think much of the abiding lore of Christ: “Having loved his own” — his by election, his by redemption, for he regarded that as already done which was about to be accomplished, — “Having loved his own which were in the world,” — not yet in heaven, but still in the midst of trial, still

imperfect, even as you and I are, — “ he loved them unto the end,” or “unto the perfection,” as it might be rendered. The Alpha of his love, which we find in eternity, bids us believe that we shall find the Omega of it nowhere but there.

**2-4.** *And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.*

Notice the wonderful contrast revealed to us in these verses. Our Lord Jesus Christ had a very vivid realization that he had come from God, and was going back to God, and that all things had been given into his hand; yet, while he knew that, and had a more than ordinary consciousness of his own dignified nature and position, he condescended to wash his disciples feet. Though many years elapsed between the event and the time when John recorded it, all the details seem to have been still present in his memory so that he distinctly mentions each separate act: “he riseth from supper, and layeth aside his upper garment, and taketh a towel, and girdeth himself.”

**5.** *After that he poureth water into a bason,*

The one that ordinarily stood in the guest-chamber for the washing of the hands and feet of the guests.

**5, 6.** *And began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?*

You must lay the stress on the pronouns in order to get the full force of the original. “Lord, dost THOU wash my feet?” The contrast is between Peter’s Master and himself.

**7, 8.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet.*

That is, Never, as long as I live, shalt thou do such a thing as that.”

**8-10.** *Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth*

*not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.*

We have often, in commenting, noticed Peter's fault; perhaps we have noticed that too much. Let us now notice Peter's excellence. I admire his humility in thinking it too mean an office for Christ to wash his feet; it seems to me to be a most proper feeling which prompted him to ask, "Dost thou wash my feet?" It seemed an overwhelming condescension of love which he could scarcely permit. No doubt he spoke too positively when he said to Christ "Thou shalt never wash my feet;" but, still, his motive in speaking thus was a good one. It was because he could not allow his Lord to stoop so low; he thought it ill manners to permit such an one as Christ to wash the feet of such an one as the poor fisherman, Peter. I have already said that there was something that was not right, and yet that was perfectly natural to this "rock" disciple, and this "dove" disciple, who was such a strange mixture of boastfulness and fickleness, yet do not forget how much good there was in him. I wish all of us were half as good as Peter. That was a grand utterance, "Wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." He meant, "Lord, let me have all the cleansing I can, not only such as the washing of my feet would bring, but such as the washing of my head and my hands also would bring. Let me be clear of everything which would prevent full fellowship with thee, for I long to be one with thee altogether." Then our Saviour meekly, gently, quietly explained that there was no need for the washing of his head and his hands, for his whole being had already been renewed by the one great act of regeneration; and as he had been cleansed from sin by the free gift of pardon at the time when he first believed, there was no need of any repetition of the spiritual bathing, all that was required was the washing of his feet, — a beautiful distinction always to be observed. He that believeth in Christ is fully forgiven. He is like a man who has gone into the bath, and washed, but, when he steps out of the bath, and put his foot on the ground, he often soils it, so that, before he robes himself, he needs to wash his feet again. That is our condition as believers in Jesus; we are washed in his precious blood, and are whiter than snow; but these feet of ours constantly touch this defiling earth, so they need every day to be washed. Christ our Lord Jesus said to Peter, "He that is washed

needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.”

**11.** *For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.*

They were all washed so far as their feet were concerned, but not all of them had been cleansed in the saved bath which removes the stains of sin.

**12-17.** *So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know, ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, you Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

Blessed are they who, when they understand the meaning of Christ's example, imitate it in their own lives.

## **JOHN 13:1-19**

**1.** *Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ had a clear foresight of all he had to endure. Future things are happily hidden from our eyes. We do not even know the moment when we shall die, nor how it will be. It is well that it is so but our Lord was able to anticipate his sufferings, by knowing all about them: “Jesus knew that his hour was come.” It was all appointed, and nothing happens to any of us by accident, chance is banished from the believer's creed. There is an appointed “hour” for each one of us, and it will come in due season. “Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of the world unto the Father.” What a beautiful way of describing death! Christ's death was certainly a more trying one than ours will be, so that this description may apply to ours as well as to his.

**2.** *And supper being ended,*

I suppose that was the Paschal supper.

**2.** *The devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;*

What a horrible purpose for Satan to put into the heart of Judas even in the presence of Jesus! I hope that the devil will not put any such purpose into your hearts or into mine while we are in this house of prayer, but no place is sacred from his intrusion, he will come in anywhere. Even where Christ himself is at the head of the table, Judas may be sitting at that same table, and Satan may then and there put into his heart the horrible purpose of betraying his Master.

**3, 4.** *Jesus knowing that the Father given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.*

Notice those words, "Jesus knowing,... he took a towel, and girded himself." If he had not known how great he was, there would not have been such condescension in his action, but he knew who he was, and what the Father had entrusted to him: "The Father had given all things into his hands." You might suppose that he would rise up, in a very dignified manner, and put on a purple robe and a golden girdle, but, instead of that, he rose from the supper table, laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. He knew that he had come forth from God, and that he was going back to God, and he performed this action on the way home to his Father. O dear brothers and sisters, if Christ thus stooped, how humble ought we to be! No office should be counted too lowly, no work for his servants should seem to be too humiliating, since Jesus "took a towel, and girded himself."

**5.** *After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*

You see that Jesus does his work well. He omits none of the details of it. He puts himself in the place of a slave, and he performs a slave's duty very thoroughly. I am afraid that, sometimes, we do our work for him in a slovenly way, but Jesus was not satisfied with simply washing his disciples' feet, he must do the wiping, too. I do bless him that he did so for this is a picture of what he has done for

us. He has washed our feet, and he often repeats the gracious act. The feet that Jesus washes he will wipe; he has not begun his task without intending to finish it. I know that he will complete in my soul the work which he has undertaken, for he fulfilled on the feet of his disciples the office he had undertaken: “ He began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.”

**6.** *Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?*

I do not wonder that he said that; would not you have been equally astonished had you been there? Peter had some faint idea who Christ was, he had confessed him in such a way that Jesus had said to him “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” Knowing so much about Christ, Peter did marvel at his action; he felt so astonished that he asked “Dost thou wash my feet?”

**7.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do those knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

I have heard this saying of our Lord applied to affliction; and it is very true that what Jesus does we do not at present understand, but we shall know by-and-by. I do not think, however, that this sentence is very applicable that way, for there was no affliction in having the feet washed. The fact is, brethren, though it is a very humbling thing to say, we do not understand that which Jesus does, even his simplest actions are a mystery to us, we have never gone into the very depths of them so as to comprehend them. “What I do, — even though I only wash thy feet, plain and simple operation as that is, — thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.” Our knowing times, dear friends, are to come. We need not be so very anxious to know at present, this is the time of love. I would forego the filling of my head for a while if I could have my heart full; but, alas, we are generally so busy trying to attain merely head knowledge! My most intense longing is for a growing heart, a heart that truly loves the Saviour. That is the way for the head to learn, for knowledge that comes by the way of the heart, and so enters the head, is the best of knowledge. Jesus said to Peter, “What I do thou knowest, not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.”

**8.** *Peter saith unto him, Those shalt never wash my feet.*

That is just like Peter. If John had not told us who it was that said this, we should have known that it was Peter. He was always in such a hurry, and he spoke so quickly, that he made many mistakes, yet he was always so honest and so true that his Master forgave his faults, and helped him to correct them.

**8.** *He answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*

If Christ does not cleanse us, we do not belong to him. If he does not, day by day, exercise a purifying influence over us, we are not his.

**9.** *Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.*

How that pendulum swings to and fro! It went this way just now: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Now it goes right away to the other extreme: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Go more gently, Peter, be more quiet. Why do you go so far in one direction and then rush off so far in another way? Thy Master knows better than thou knowest what is right for thee.

**10.** *Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.*

Dear friends, when we believe in Christ, we are washed in the fountain filled with blood, and we are clean; but this world is such a sinful place that we cannot walk through it for even a day without some of its mire and dust clinging to us. Besides, God's lilies are so pure that they are hardly fit to bloom in such a defiling atmosphere. Oh, how we need that the dew should wash the lily when the night comes on! How greatly we need to have the foot-washing administered to us every day! We need not repeat the first great washing, the bath by which our sins were cleansed; when that was done, it was done once for all. Our sin was pardoned as before a Judge; but we want it to be taken away as before our Father, for we are now under his loving discipline. Christ further said to his disciples, "Ye are clean, but not all." Does he say that to us at this time? "Ye are clean, but not all." Where sits the man, in this house of prayer, who is not clean, the sinner who has not yet been washed by Jesus Christ? Where sits the woman who is not clean? The Lord have mercy upon you, dear friends! You know that, in the olden days, they put a red cross on the door of the house where the plague was. We cannot put a cross upon you; but I pray you to consider

yourselves as marked men and marked women in the sight of God, and I pray the Lord to take that mark away by causing you to be washed, that you may be clean every whit. How quickly he can wash the foulest sinners! He that believeth in Jesus is washed in the precious blood, and he is clean. God cleanse us all for his great name's sake!

**11-15.** *For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

Christ's actions are the pattern for us to imitate! Oh, that we followed them more closely!

**16.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.*

Sometimes, we think that we are a deal too great to wash anybody's feet; we should like to see a person propose it to us, such big people as we are! If we talk like that, there is great need that we should be taken down. That would be the true way to rise in the likeness of Jesus. Oh, that we were lowlier in humility! We should be higher in grace if we were.

**17.** *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

Peter wanted to know them; Jesus would have us do them.

**18.** *I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen:*

Christ has a chosen people, though some will not believe it. Yet it is so, for he says, "I know whom I have chosen."

**18, 19.** *But that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.*

"That I am." So, you see, even the great trouble of the early Church the betrayal by Judas, was used by Christ for the strengthening of his disciples' faith. He foretold that it would be as it came to pass. So, dear friends, in these latter days, many forsake the gospel, but Jesus told us that it would be so. He taught his servants to write that there would be a falling away, and that in these

last days there would be scoffers; and as we read the prophecies, and compare them with the fulfillment, even the doleful fact itself confirms our faith in our Lord. God bless to us this brief reading of his own Word! Amen.

## **JOHN 14**

I suppose that many of you know this chapter by heart. I notice that, in all old Christians' Bibles, this leaf is well worn, — sometimes worn out. We have here our Lord's homely talk to his disciples; it is full of sublimity, yet it is blessedly simple. There is a sort of unveiling of himself in this chapter. It is not so much like a public discourse as a private conversation and this tends to make the Saviour's speech appear the more condescending, and yet also the more sublime.

*1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

There is no cure for heart-trouble but heart-trust. "Ye believe in God," —you do trust in Divine Providence, now trust in the Saviour's great atonement. You have come close to God already, come closer still to the Incarnate God, the Lord Jesus Christ; hear him say to you, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Your faith already deals with some things; now let it deal with more things. Your past troubles have been endured by faith; now endure the present in the same way.

*2. In my Father's house are many mansions:*

You are at home in Christ even now if you are a believer in him. Wherever you are, you are your Heavenly Father's own child; and you have realized the truth of what David wrote in the twenty-third Psalm, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Usually, when we are singing that sweetly-solemn hymn, beginning — "For ever with the Lord," we are thinking about heaven. That is quite right; but "for ever" means now as well as the future, it covers time here as well as eternity in glory. We are with the Lord even now; whether we are down here or up there.

*2. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

So that, when you go from this earth, you need not fear that you will be launched into space, or that you will have to plunge into the great unknown,

**3.** *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

“I will come to you by my Spirit. I will come to you by-and-by, if my Father shall purpose it, in the hour of death; or if not, I will come in person at my second advent; but, in any case, I will be sure to come. My dear children, I am going away, but it is only for a little while. I am coming again, so be not troubled as though you had said ‘Good-bye’ to me forever. ‘I will come again,’ and when I do come, I shall never go from you again.”

**4.** *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

Yes, we do know where Christ has gone, and we also know the way.

**5.** *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?*

I like to hear Thomas talk, even though his is a very unwise speech; I wonder when you and I ever made wise ones. We never do unless we borrow them, for all that comes of us naturally is childish and foolish, “for we know in part, and we prophesy in part.” When the child becomes a man, he will put away childish things; but meanwhile our speech betrayeth us. We seldom speak even of any of the great mysteries of the gospel without uttering some words of our own which show that we have understood them yet. I think the Lord likes us to display our ignorance, first that we may know it, and then that he may remove it.

**6.** *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

Christ has gone to the Father’s upper house to make it ready for all the redeemed family. We could never have entered there if he had not gone in first; and even now, there is no coming to the Father in faith or in prayer except by Christ, we must not even dream of communion with God except through our Lord Jesus Christ. Luther used to say — and to say very wisely, too, — “I will have nothing to do with an absolute God; I must come to God by Christ Jesus.” “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

*7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.*

All of the Father that we can know is visible in Christ, “for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” And if we truly know Christ, we also know the Father. Christ always seems to be knowable, for he brings himself down to such a nearness to us that it seems easy to know him. Well, then, knowing Christ, we also know the Father, and have seen him.

*8. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*

Thomas spoke just now like a babe in grace, now here is Philip talking like another baby; yet how bold his speech is! “Lord, shew us the Father.” Why, no man can see the Father’s face, and live! Yet here is a child of God apparently forgetful of that fact.

*9. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*

Is not this a homely talk between the Master and his disciples? Said I not rightly that Christ here seems to unveil and unbosom himself? He lets these children of his talk away much at their ease; and I think we ought to be at ease when we are talking with Christ. Some like a very stately service in their worship, something very grand, that makes ordinary worshippers stand afar off. Let them enjoy it if they can; but as for us, we prefer something which permits us to come very near to our Lord.

*10. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?*

Yes, Lord, we do believe that; thine eternal and inseparable union with the Father is a doctrine about which we have no question whatsoever.

*10. The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.*

Notice, dear friends, that even the Lord Jesus Christ did not profess to teach doctrines out of his own mind. He says, “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself.” Now, if it is so with the Master, how much more ought it to be so with the servants! But have you not noticed how it is with the great men of the pulpit in these days? It is, “What I have thought out, I make known to you.”

It is, "What has come to me by the spirit of the age, the culture of the period, I tell you." God save us from this kind of talk! It is no business of mine, I know, ever to come to you merely with a message of my own; for if the Lord Jesus Christ did not do so, what a feel his servant must be if he pretends to do it! No; if it is not revealed in this Book, neither shall it be taught by us, nor ought it to be received by you. So Jesus says to his disciples, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself." He glories in his union with the Father, and in the fact that he does not come as an independent teacher of thoughts of his own inventing, but he tells out to us what is in his Father's heart.

**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 believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

We cannot do Christ's redeeming work; it would be blasphemy to suppose that we could, for he said of it, "It is finished." But we can do the kind of work that Christ did in instructing men, and in being the means of blessing men. Many of the apostles brought to a knowledge of the truth more souls than their Lord did by his personal ministry. He was pleased, after the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, to bring great multitudes to the faith by some of his servants, while he himself preached, comparatively speaking, to but few, only journeying up and down that little land of Palestine, and scarcely traversing all of it. And if we will but trust him, and seek to imitate his wondrous life, we also shall do the works that he did, and do them on an even larger scale, and do them with even greater results.

**13, 14.** *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

Observe the breadth of prayer: "If ye shall ask any thing." Yet observe also the limit of prayer: "If ye shall ask any thing in my name." There are some things which we should not ask in Christ's name, as we have no promise about them, or because we have indications that they would be contrary to God's usual method of procedure. We must not ask, in the name of Christ, for what would

be absurd or outrageous for us to expect God to grant, neither dare we use that sacred name in pleading for things which would only be for the satisfaction of our own will. We must let the will of God rise above all; but, subject to that will, we may ask anything in Christ's name, and he will do it.

**15.** *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

Obedience is the truest proof of love. Some, out of supposed love to Christ, have attempted or committed acts of fanaticism; they have been enthusiastic, and, in many cases, doubtless, very sincere; but they have also been very unwise. Here is the best thing that you can do out of love for Christ: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

**16.** *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; —*

"One who will not need to die, and so to be separated from you; but who, once coming to you, shall tarry with you throughout the ages;" —

**17.** *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

Do you not notice how this verse contradicts the current thought of the period about "the spirit of the age" being so much in advance of the Spirit of all past ages? Listen again to these words of our Lord: "The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive." The world is always receiving one form of falsehood or another; tossed to and fro, and never abiding long in one stay, it cries, "This is the truth," or "That is the truth," or "Now we have it; this is the truth." But Christ says, "The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

**18.** *I will not leave you comfortless:*

Or, "orphans," for that is the meaning of the original: "I will not leave you orphans."

**18-20.** *I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

This is all very simple; the words are nearly all words of one syllable, yet there are depths here in which a leviathan might plunge, and lose himself.

**21-23.** *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Only holy men can see the holy Christ, and it is only as we walk in obedience to him that we can have the Son of God walking with us, and the Father and the Son dwelling with us.

**24.** *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.*

Notice that important truth again, and observe what weight and what stress Christ lays upon it.

**25, 26.** *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

Brethren, ought we not to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, since the Father himself does everything in that name? Even concerning the sending of the Comforter, Christ says, "whom the Father will send in my name." Then, he would certainly have the Father and the children acting upon the same principles; the Father glorifying Christ by sending the Spirit in his name, and ourselves glorifying Christ by presenting our prayers and praises in that one adorable name.

**27.** *Peace I leave with you, —*

"I told you not to let your heart be troubled; now I go further, and I leave you this precious legacy of peace: 'Peace I leave with you,' " —

**27.** *My peace I give unto you: —*

"My own deep peace, which even my sufferings and death cannot disturb." —

**27-29.** *Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.*

Oh, what numbers of things which Christ foretold have come to pass already! Have you, dear friends, believed all the more because of them? How many answers to prayer, how many deliverances out of trouble, how many helps in the time of need, have you had! Surely, when all this has come to pass, you ought to believe.

**30, 31.** *Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do, Arise, let us go hence.*

So the Saviour went forth to his passion and his death, that all might know the supremacy of his love to the Father and his love to his people. And so let us, in our measure, be ever ready to say, Arise, let us go hence, service or to suffering, since our Saviour leads the way.

## **JOHN 14**

**1.** *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

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; and when they are, he is troubled also. 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: 'Ye 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.*

**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 ye 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 for ever; so do not be troubled at my departure.” How tenderly and lovingly this is all put!

**4.** *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye 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 saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; 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 saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

How impossible it is fully to 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 ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from, henceforth ye 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 saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth 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 believeth 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 still 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 be able still to pray, and prayer will bring you greater blessings than any that I ever gave you.”

**13, 14.** *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

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

**15, 16.** *If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;-*

There was the One who would enable the disciples to meet every trial, —that other Comforter. “Intimate Knowledge of the Holy Spirit.” 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 for ever;” —

**17.** *Even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him;-*

“You are on familiar terms with him, you are intimate with him, you know him;” —

**17-20.** *For he dwelleth 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 seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye 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 ye in me, and I in you.”

**21, 22.** *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*

“Peradventure, if thou didst manifest thyself to the world, the world would bow down before thee, and worship thee.” 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 love 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 loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye 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 Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.*

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 giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye 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 come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath 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 hence.*

## **JOHN 14**

Let us read that well-known and most blessed chapter, John xiv., which so clearly shows our Saviour's tender consideration for the comfort of his people, lest the great grief excited in them by his impending death should altogether break their hearts.

**1.** *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

I think our Saviour meant to say, and really did say. "If ye believe in God, ye are believing in me; and if ye believe in me, ye are believing in God; for there is such a perfect unity between us that you need not, when I die make any distinction between me and God, but still believe in me as ye believe in the Father."

**2.** *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.*

"Wicked men will shut you out of my Father's house below: the temple at Jerusalem, though being still used for Jewish worship after all its ritual and ceremonialism have been abolished, will cease to be my Father's house to you; but there is a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and there is room for all of you there. When this country gets to be a desert to you, remember that there is the home country, the blessed glory land, on the other side of the river, and the Father's house there with its many mansions."

**2, 3.** *I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you, unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Jesus often keeps this promise in many senses. By his gracious spirit, he has come again, by his divine presence in the means of grace, he often comes again. By-and-by, if we die, he will come again to meet us; and if we do not die, then will the promise be fulfilled to the greatest possible extent, for Jesus will come again,

and receive in his own proper person those who are alive and remain unto his coming. Anyhow, “I will come again, and receive you unto myself,” remains one of the sweetest promises that was ever given to believers by the Lord Jesus Christ. He did not say, “I will receive you to heaven;” he promised something far better than that: “I will receive you unto myself.” Oh, what bliss it will be to get to Christ, to be with him for ever and ever!

**4.** *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

“At least, I have taught it to you; I have explained it to you; I have told you that I am the goal of your way, and the way to your goal; that I am the end, and also the way to that end.”

**5.** *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?*

Oh, how much ignorance there may be where there ought to be much knowledge. It is not always the man who lives in the sunlight who sees the most. Thomas had been one of the twelve apostles for years, he had during all that time had Christ for his Teacher, yet he had learned very little. With such poor teachers as we are, it is no wonder if our hearers and scholars learn but little from us, yet they ought to learn much from Christ, although I think that we learn nothing even from Jesus Christ himself except under the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

**6.** *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

“I am going to the Father, — that is where I am going, Thomas, and you can only come to the Father by me; do you not know that?”

**7.** *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also:*

For Christ is the express image of his Father’s person, so that you always see the Father when you see the Son.

**7.** *And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.*

Thomas had made an advance in heavenly knowledge; he had taken a higher degree in divinity now that the Master had taught him so much upon this most important point: “from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.”

**8.** *Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*

It was not merely one of Christ's scholars, you see, who was so dull of comprehension, here is another of the dunces, Philip.

*9. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet had thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*

He who really knows Christ, and understands Christ's character, understands, so far as it can be understood by man, the character of God. We know more of God from the life of Christ than we can learn from any other source.

*10-12. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very work's sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

The Lord Jesus Christ, after he had gone back to heaven gave to his servants the power to do these "greater works" — the Holy spirit resting upon them, — in the gathering in of the nations unto their Lord. Whereas Christ kept to one little country, he sent his first disciples, and he sends us still to preach the gospel to every creature in the whole world, and he clothes his servants with all needful authority and power to do the work he has committed to their charge.

*13-14. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

There is the only limit to true believing prayer. There are some things which we could not ask in Christ's name; that is, using his authority in asking for them. There are some wishes and whims that we may cherish, not that we think we may pray about; but we have not Christ's name or authority to warrant us in expecting that we shall realize them, and therefore we cannot ask for them in his name. To say, "For Christ's sake," is one thing; but to say, "I ask this in Christ's name," is quite another matter. He never authorized you to make use of his name about everything. There are only certain things about which you can pray in his name, such as are the express subject of a divine promise, and when you pray for one of

those things, you shall prove Christ's words to be true, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."

**15-16.** *If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter,*

The Paraclete, the Succored, the Helper. The word "Comforter" has lost its old meaning; you get it in certain old writings, when you read of such-and-such a man that he gave to someone else succor and comfort. There is more here than merely giving us consolation. It means Helper: "He shall give you another Helper." *Advocatus* is the Latin, and that too is the correct word: "He shall give you another advocate," —

**16, 17.** *That he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

Worldly men are not cognizant of the existence of the Holy Spirit. They do not believe in him; they say that there may or may not be such a Divine Being in the world as the Holy Spirit, but they have never come across his path. This then is one of the tests of true believers, the twice-born, they have received a new nature which enables them to recognize the existence of the Spirit of God and to feel the influence of his work: "Ye know him: for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

**18, 19.** *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me:*

"Your spiritual sight, which discerns the presence with you of the Holy Spirit, will show my continued existence when I am gone away from you."

**19, 20.** *Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

This is something more for us to know. To know that Christ is in the Father, is of a thing; but it is still more for us to understand the next mystic unity, "ye in me, and I in you." Oh, wondrous combination of the Father and the Son, and of Immanuel, God with us, and ourselves!

**21, 22.** *He that hath my commandment, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father,*

*and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*

Large-hearted Judas, very different from Judas Iscariot! He wants Christ to manifest himself to all the world; he seems to have been a man of very broad views. He does not comprehend discriminating love and electing grace; he wants all the privileges of the children of God to be the privileges of the King's enemies, but that cannot be.

**23.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Christ is sure to manifest himself to those who love him, but how can he manifest himself to those who love him not? They cannot see him; they would not appreciate him if they could see him, they have no spiritual taste with which to enjoy him.

**24-26.** *He that loveth me not keepeth not my saying: and the word which ye 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, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

Do we sufficiently look to the Holy Spirit for divine teaching? We read our Bibles, I trust, with diligence, and also any explanatory books by which we may better understand our Bibles, but do we look up to the Holy Spirit, and ask him distinctly and immediately to teach us what is the meaning of Christ's words, and to bring them to our remembrance? I wish we did this more than we do.

**27.** *Peace I leave with you,*  
"That is my legacy to you."

**27.** *My peace I give unto you: —*

My own deep calm of spirit, which is not ruffled or broken though the contradiction of sinners continually annoys me: "My peace I give unto you." Christ puts his hand into his heart, and takes out of that priceless casket the choicest jewel it contains, — his own peace, and he says, "Wear that on your finger, the seal and token of my love." "My peace I give unto you: —"

**27.** *Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*

“With an expectation of getting a reward for it; neither do I give it to take it back again; nor do I give it in mere presence; I give it in reality, sincerely, disinterestedly, as your freehold possession for ever.”

**27-28.** *Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*

Christ as man had condescended to become less than the Father; he had taken upon himself the form of a servant, but now he was going back to take his own natural dignity again. We ought to rejoice in his gain. Though you may think it a loss not to have his corporeal presence, yet would you like to call him away from yonder harps that ring out his praises, and the perfect love of the Father with whom he reigns supreme? Oh, no, blessed Master, stay where thou art!

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

## **JOHN 14**

**1.** *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

You will be troubled; that cannot be helped. But let not your heart be troubled. You are like a ship, and all the water in the sea cannot hurt a ship, if it is kept outside of her. Let not your heart be troubled. How are you to prevent it? Faith is the remedy. Ye believe already; believe more. “Ye believe in God; believe also in me.” “You have a trust in the infinite power of God; believe in me as the incarnation of his infinite love.”

**2.** *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

There is no room for you on earth; there will be in heaven. If troubles should so multiply that it seems impossible to live in them,

you shall be carried away where you shall live above them “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” You may depend upon the love of Christ beloved, for if there were anything dark, mysterious, distressing, which would lead you to despair, he would not have kept it back. He treats you frankly. “If it were not so I would have told you. I go, and you are sorry that I go. It is the source of your sorrow. But I go to prepare place for you.”

**3.** *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Oh! this is ground for sweet comfort, and it ought to yield it to us tonight. He has gone, but he will come again; he has not left us for ever. Space divides us for awhile; but, skipping over the mountains like a roe and a young hart, he will come again, even to this poor world, and to us, his waiting church, he will come again. Therefore, have patience. Let not your heart be troubled. Jesus Christ will come very soon.

**4.** *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

Ye know where Christ is gone. Ye know how to get at him. The throne on which he sits is the throne of grace. He is gone to the Father, and your prayers will find the Father. You know the way. Then frequent it; and though as yet in your bodies you cannot reach to him, yet in spirit you can. “Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.”

**5.** *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?*

Which was a contradiction of his Master, which Thomas ought not to have uttered. He should have put it much rather in the form of a question for explanation, than of such a fiat denial. His Master said, “Whither I go ye know.” He said, “We know not whither thou goest.” But we must take care that we do not contradict Christ. Our unbelief would be shamed out of us, if we were to look at it and examine it. I am persuaded that your faith will be justified the more you examine it, till you will discover that faith in God is nothing, after all, but sanctified common sense. So unbelief will appear to be more shameful the more you examine it, till you discover at length that it is nothing but garish folly. An outrage upon the first principles of wisdom is distrust of God.

**6, 7.** *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.*

This, then, is the main point of knowledge with us, to know Christ. All the studies in the world are vain, compared with the study of Christ crucified. This is the most excellent of all the sciences. He that knoweth Christ knoweth the way, the truth, the life, yea, and God himself.

**8, 9.** *Philip saith unto him, Lord shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*

The best view of God we can ever have is Christ in the person of his Son. There is more seen of God than in all nature; aye and in all history added to nature. God hath given us a full-length portrait of himself in Jesus; while in all his works, we have no more than a mere miniature of him. Oh! that we knew Christ more; then should we know the Father.

**10-12.** *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

Oh! what strength there is in faith. These are the same people who are not to be troubled. They are to rise so much above trouble of heart, that they are to become performers of works like to Christ. Yea, and since Christ has gone, and he has endowed us with the Holy Spirit, we are to do yet greater works than he did. Oh! to know the possibilities of our nature; to know what God can do by us. What appears to us as we are, as unable to be done, we may be enabled to do through the spirit of God which is in Christ Jesus.

**13, 14.** *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

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

**15.** *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

Oh! some of us would have liked him to have said, "If ye love me, give all your money; go into a convent. If ye love me, perform some wonderful action. Go into the streets and preach; where you would be hooted. Go to some foreign country and get yourself made a martyr of." No, no; "If ye love me, keep my commandments. Stop at home near your father and mother. If ye love me, love my disciples. Let love rule you. And in that place in life in which I have set you, try to honour my name by exhibiting my character. If ye love me, keep my commandments."

**16-19.** *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him: for he dwelleth 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 seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.*

"Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me." Now, when the world does not see him, we still see him. He is present to our faith, though passing from our sight. "Because I live,

ye shall live also.” Is he a dead Christ? Then he has a dead people for his church. He is a living Saviour: he has a living people; and they shall no more die than he shall die; “for he, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.” “Because I live, ye shall live also.”

**20.** *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in You.*

What a wonderful union this is — Christ in the Father; the saints in Christ, and Christ in the saints. These be riddles which are not meant for the children of this world; but they who are the children of God shall understand them, shall live upon them.

**21.** *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:*

Not he that preaches about them, talks much about them; boasts about a higher life and all sorts of things; but “he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”

**21, 22.** *And he that loveth me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*

If thou dost manifest thyself to us, who are only a few poor fishermen, thou does not extend thy kingdom so; but if thou wouldest manifest thyself to the world in all thy glory, surely they would be surprised and overwhelmed, and thy kingdom would thus come. But that is not Christ’s way. His manifestations are for his own: not for glitter, but for edification. He comes to bless them; not that he may be ostentatious among men.

**23.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Oh! what an honoured man that — for the Father and the Son to be his guests, to make an abode in his heart.

**24-28.** *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye 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 Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*

Christ had stooped to take a lower place for our sakes.

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

## **JOHN 14:1-12**

### **1. Let not your heart be troubled:**

This is one of those verses that you may read as slowly as you like, and spell out every letter, and find honey in it all.

### **1. Ye believe in God, believe also in me.**

As Jews, they had already known and seen the power of God. They were now to rise to the faith of Christians, and to believe in Jesus their Saviour.

Even though they should see him die, they were not to doubt him: “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.”

### **2. In my Father’s house are many mansions:**

So there is room for many, there are homes for many, there is wealth for many; “In my Father’s house are many mansions:”

### **2. If it were not so, I would have told you.**

The Saviour seems to say to his disciples, “I keep nothing back from you; had there been some sorrowful fact to be revealed to you, I would at length have told you of it.”

### **2. I go to prepare a place for you.**

“There must be a heaven, for I am going there myself, and I am going on purpose to make it ready for you.”

**3.** *And If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

That is the first and simplest idea of heaven, to be with Christ; and I think it is the last and sublimest idea of heaven, too,—to be with Christ: “that where I am, there ye may be also.”

**4, 5.** *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?*

The apostles blundered, and lost themselves in the words of their Master, instead of entering into the spirit of what he said; so we must not wonder if we often do the same. Unless we wait upon God to be instructed by his Spirit, even the plainest passages of Scripture may be obscure to us.

**6, 7.** *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.*

Jesus had been talking about the many mansions, and now he talks about the Father. Is the Father, then, the same as heaven? Ay, indeed; to come to the Father is to come to perfect blessedness, to know the fullness of his eternal love, and to enjoy it in face-to-face communion;—this is heaven.

What higher bliss can we desire?

**8, 9.** *Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?*

Do we, then, see the Father when we see Christ? And is the Father’s presence heaven? Then, Christ is heaven; and to be with him is heaven. It is even so. He is the way to heaven, the truth of heaven, the life of heaven. He is heaven’s everything.

“His track I see, and I’ll pursue  
The narrow way, till him I view;”

And when I view him, shall I not have seen the Father, and have entered into the Father’s rest?

**10-12.** *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the*

*Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

In consequence of Christ's going to the Father, and the Spirit of God descending upon Christ's disciples, they are enabled to outdo their Master in some forms of holy service. For instance, some of them brought more to the faith than Christ himself had done during his lifetime, and so realized the fulfillment of this promise, "The works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 14:1-12: AND COLOSSIANS 1:1-19.

### **JOHN 14:1-20**

This is a chapter which I suppose most of us know by heart, full of comfort, a very river of delight.

Remember that our Lord spoke this to his own beloved ones — to the inner circle. It was not addressed to the general public. It is not a sermon to the world. It is a discourse to those who had lived with him, and were now sorrowing because he was about to leave them by a cruel death. Thus he begins: —

**1.** *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

"You have believed in God, whom you have never seen. Believe in me when you cannot see me. Believe that I still am — that I still am working for your good. You have believed in God, though he has not manifested himself to you in his person as I have done. Now when I am no longer seen of you, believe in me as you believe in the invisible God." It is well for us to have the same faith in Christ that we have in the everlasting God. This is the cure for the heart trouble. You are sure to be troubled in heart unless you have much faith in God. "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

**2.** *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

Our Lord was going away, but he was going away with a purpose, and a grand purpose too — a purpose which had to do with the everlasting future of his beloved ones. “I go to prepare a place for you.”

**3.** *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.*

And he will come again, beloved. That is our grandest hope. We are looking for his coming. It is very sweet to know that we shall be for ever with the Lord if we die before his coming; but still the hope of God’s people is the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead — his taking to himself all his redeemed to be for ever with him.

**4.** *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

We know where Christ has gone. Every step we can follow. The way we know. It always reconciles us to a friend’s going away if we know where he has gone — know all about him. A mother tells me that she has missed her boy now for twelve months, and never heard from him. That is sorrow; but when we know that our son has gone to the other side of the world, and we know why he has gone, and where he has gone, and what is coming of it, we are greatly comforted. So Jesus says, “Whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know.”

**5.** *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?*

There is always somebody who has not learned the lesson. I am afraid that it is not one Thomas, but a great many Thomases that still have to say, “We know not.” Although Christ himself be the teacher, we are always poor learners.

**6.** *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

There is nothing good except by Christ. They that hate Christ very soon hate God. They get rid of the Christ of the gospel, and they soon get rid of God out of creation too, and there is no coming to the Father in any way or fashion except by Christ. He has gone to the Father, but he is also the way to the Father.

**7, 8.** *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*

There is a Philip as well as a Thomas. It does not seem that, even with Christ for a teacher, we should learn much without the Holy Ghost. The greatest blessing, after all, is not the bodily presence of the Saviour, though we learn something from that, but it is the indwelling and the teaching of the Holy Ghost which we most of all need.

**9-11.** *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.*

The eternal union between Christ and the Father should never be forgotten by us. He seems to sink himself, but the well-beloved Son will have it that his words are not his own, but come from the Father. I cannot help remarking how different this is from some who profess to be the ministers of Christ. They must be original; they must be great thinkers. Every man nowadays makes his own gospel, but the Saviour was no original — the grandest of all intellects, and yet he says, “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very work’s sake.”

**12.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

While the Master was here in his humiliation he healed a few poor Jews, and raised here and there a dead one, but he purposely veiled the splendor of his godhead. But now that he has gone up on high, he does greater wonders by his servants than he himself personally did, for he said to a few poor fishermen, “Go and break up the Roman Empire,” and they did it. They preached the gospel, and the gods of the heathen that sat upon their thrones for ages were

cast to the moles and the bats. And there are greater victories yet before the Church of God. You ought not to measure our passage by the past, but believe that “greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father.”

**13.** *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

We do not believe enough in the power of prayer. I sometimes feel staggered when I meet with good people, undoubtedly good people, who still look upon it as a new thing that we should believe that God hears our prayers. But this is the fundamental of Christian experience. How can we live without the mercy-seat? And if that mercy-seat be nothing but a vain show, and prayer be only a pious but useless exercise, what is there in the Christian religion at all? We have heard some very wise people say that prayer is no doubt beneficial to those who offer it; but to suppose that it has any effect upon the mind of God is absurd. Do you not see, brethren, that they think us all idiots. They must do so, for do you suppose that any but an idiot would go on praying at all if he did not believe that it had some effect upon the mind of God, and that it did prevail with God? I would as soon stand and whistle out of my bedroom window for half an hour, as I would kneel down and pray for half an hour, if there were to be no result coming from it, and so would every sensible man. But we know of a surety that God heareth prayer. We cannot imagine our Lord deceiving us, and he must have done so if it is not so, for he says, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

**14.** *If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

But there is a deal of praying that never reaches to the name of Christ. Even to pray for Christ’s sake does not reach to the point of praying in Christ’s name. If I go and transact business in the name of such a person, that is a different thing from merely asking to be allowed to do my own business for the sake of that person. But when you are authorized to use the name of Christ — as it were, to write his signature to your cheques — oh! what power there is in prayer at that time! “If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.” But you cannot ask everything in that name. You are obliged to draw back from some prayers, and say, “No; Christ would never authorize me to put his name to that.” You see there is a blessed

cheques upon the universality of prayer — a most necessary and useful cheques — for we would not dare to ask some things in that wondrous name.

**15-17.** *If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

He dwelt with the apostles, but was not in them until after Christ rose from the dead. But now you and I knew his indwelling. He has made our bodies to be the temples of the Holy Ghost.

**18.** *I will not leave you comfortless:*

Orphans.

**18.** *I will come to you.*

He does this by his Spirit, but still he means more than that. It is not a spiritual coming merely; it is a personal coming. “I will come to you.”

**19, 20.** *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

Wondrous unity — Christ in the Father, we in him, and Christ in us. Who understands this? He only who is taught of the Holy Spirit.

## **JOHN 14:1-21**

We have often read this chapter, both in our private meditations, and at our public worship; but we cannot read it too often. It is sweet as honey and the honeycomb. It contains the very quintessence of consolation. Every word in the chapter is rich, and full of meaning. Perhaps they understand it best who cannot read it quickly, but are obliged to spell over every word of it, and so are like those who feast upon marrow and fatness.

**1.** *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

That is the cure for heart trouble, and all other trouble, too, — believing in God, and believing in his Son, Jesus Christ. Faith is the double cure of trouble, for it delivers us altogether from the trouble, and, at the same time, it helps us to find sweetness in it as long as

we have to endure it. Notice that our Saviour says, "Let not your heart be troubled." If your heart can be preserved from trouble, you will not be greatly tried by it. Trouble is in your house, perhaps; but, if so, let it not get into your heart. The waves beat all round your vessel, but let not the vessel itself leak, and take in the water: "Let not your heart be troubled."

*2. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

This was very largely the cause of their trouble; they were full of sorrow because their Lord and Master was going away from them; yet he was going for their good. It was with a set purpose that he was leaving them, and the same reason still keeps him away from us. We are not to mourn for him as we might for one slain in battle, who would never come back to us. He has gone for a little while to another country, to the great Father's house, upon a most gracious and necessary errand: "I go to prepare a place for you." The Spirit of God is down here to prepare us for the place; the Son of God is up yonder to prepare the place for us.

*3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Do not tell us about a purgatory for Christ's people, a limbo in which they are to be awhile to be prepared to share his glory. No, he will come at the right time, and take them to be where he is, and they shall have the very place that Jesus has: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Do you want a better rest than that after all your work and warfare here below? Does not this prospect cheer you while you are journeying down the hill of life?

*5. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

"Ye know that I am going to the Father, and ye know that I am myself the way to the Father; I am going whence I came."

*6. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life:*

"I am all that you want on your way to heaven, the truth that will make heaven for you, and the life which you will enjoy with me for ever in heaven. I give you all that while you are yet here below."

**6.** *No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

There is no getting to God except through Christ. Those who say that we can go to heaven without a Mediator know not what they say, or say what they know to be false. There can be no acceptable approach to the Father except by Jesus Christ the Son.

**7.** *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also:*

For Christ is also “the mighty God, the everlasting Father.” All the character of God is seen in the Christ of God, and he who truly comes to Christ has really come to the Father.

**7.** *And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.*

I hope that this may be said of many of us, that we do truly know God; and, since we have seen Christ by faith, we have seen the Father also.

**8.** *Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*

What a comfort these questions and blunders of Thomas and Philip ought to be to us, for it is clear that we are not the only dolts in Christ’s school; and if he could bear with them, he can bear with us also. Like them, how little do we retain of that which he teaches us! We are taught much, but we learn little, for we are such poor scholars. Our memory holds but little, and our understanding still less of what we have been taught, and we are all too apt to want something that we can see, just as Philip said, “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.”

**9-11.** *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake.*

Note how the Master continued to urge his disciples to believe. Again and again he returned to that vital point: Believest thou? “Believe me...: believe me.” This he did because there is no relief from heart-trouble but by believing the everlasting truth of God, and especially by believing him who is “the truth.” The believer alone

has true peace of heart; the unbeliever is tossed to and fro on the billows of the great ocean of doubt; how can he rest? There is nothing for him to rest upon. Happily, Christ is still saying, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest;" and they are truly wise who accept his gracious invitation.

**12.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

When Christ had gone back to the Father, he opened all heaven's treasures for his people; he bestowed the Spirit of all grace, and so his servants were helped to do even greater works than he himself did while he was upon the earth. We cannot add anything to his atonement; that work must for ever stand as complete and unique; but there are other forms of service, in which he engaged in his earthly ministry, in which his servants have gone far beyond him. The Lord Jesus Christ never preached a sermon after which three thousand were converted and baptized in one day; to a large extent he kept his personal ministry within the bounds of Palestine; but, after his resurrection, when the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, then, in the power of the Spirit, greater works than his were wrought the wide world over.

**13, 14.** *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

Is that promise true to every man? Certainly not. It was made by Christ to his own disciples, and not to all of them absolutely; but only to them as they believe in him, as they are filled with his Spirit, and as they keep his commandments. There are some of God's children who have little power with him in prayer, — some who walk so disorderly that, since they do not listen to God's words, he will not listen to theirs. Yet he will give them necessaries, as you give even to your naughty and disobedient children; but he will not give them the luxury of prevailing prayer, and that full fellowship with him which comes through abiding in him. Such luxuries he saves for his obedient children, who are filled with his Spirit. Even under the old dispensation, David wrote, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of

thine heart;” and in a very special sense, under the new dispensation, that spirituality of mind, which enables us to delight in God, is a necessary antecedent to our obtaining the desires of our heart in the high and spiritual sphere of prayer.

**15-17.** *If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him:*

The world is carnal, it is unspiritual; therefore, it is unable to see or to know the Spirit of God. A man without a spiritual nature cannot recognize the Holy Spirit; he must be born again before he can do so. You who are only soul and body need to receive that third and loftier principle — the spirit which is wrought in us by the Spirit of God. Until you have it, this verse applies to you: “The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.”

**17.** *But ye know him;*

Christ’s own disciples know him.

**17-19.** *For he dwelleth 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 seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.*

Oh, what a rich promise! How, then, can Christ’s people ever perish? Until Christ himself perishes, no child of his can ever be lost.

**20.** *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

Three wondrous mysteries of union, — Christ in the Father, the Church in Christ, and Christ in his Church.

**21.** *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

May we be such lovers of Christ that he may love us, and manifest himself unto us, for his name’s sake! Amen.

## **JOHN 14:15-31**

**15, 16.** *If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

Is it not very sweet to think that the Spirit of God is given to the Church in answer to the prayer of Christ? Prayer is a holy exercise, for Jesus prayed; and what a powerful influence prayer has, for his prayer has brought to us “another Comforter,” —

**17.** *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him:*

This poor world will not receive anything which it cannot see. It is ruled by its senses; it is carnal and fleshly, and mindeth not the things that are unseen. It cannot discern them.

**17, 18.** *But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

That expression, “I will not leave you comfortless,” might be rendered, “I will not leave you orphans.”

**19.** *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.*

What a wealth of meaning these words contain! The sentences are very simple, but they are also sublime. The gorgeous language, in which some orators indulge, is, when the meaning of it is condensed, like great clouds of steam which produce but a few drops of water. But, here, you have vast baths pressed into a small compass, and those that seem most plain are really the most deep. “Because I live, ye shall live also.” As surely as Christ lives, so must his people. They cannot die, for he lives, to die no more, and they live in him.

**20.** *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

Mysterious triple union, — Christ in the Father, we in Christ, and Christ in us. This is a complete riddle to all who have never been taught of the Spirit of God.

**21, 22.** *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith*

*unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world ?*

He did really answer the question, though perhaps not directly. This is the process by which he manifests himself unto his people, and not unto the world: —

**23, 24.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love 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 loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.*

There is Divine authority at the back of every word uttered by the Man Christ Jesus. His message comes not from himself alone, but from the Eternal Father as well.

**25-28.** *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*

And truly so he was, for Christ had, for a while, laid aside his own greatness, and taken the position of a servant.

**29, 30.** *And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.*

His words must come to an end, for he vies going to perform his mightiest deeds. He could converse no longer, for he was going from converse to conflict. He must meet his great enemy now and leave his dearest friends.

**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 hence.*

And so he went to the garden of Gethsemane, — a brave, gentle, confident, victorious spirit, “straitened” till he had accomplished the great work of our redemption.

## JOHN 14:15-31

**15-17.** *If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

“I am going away from you, you will not have my personal presence much longer; but I will send you One who will never go away from you, for whom there is no death and no departure: ‘another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth,’ — who knows the truth, who can teach the truth, and who applies the truth to the hearts and consciences of men, — ‘whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.’” Let us not imagine that the world ever will receive the Spirit of God. It is supposed by some, that the world gets more enlightened from age to age, but that is a supposition for which there is not the slightest foundation. The death of human nature never develops into life; the darkness brought by the Fall never becomes light without the operation of a supernatural power. It is the Spirit of God that worketh this change in God’s own children: “but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” He was with them in a certain sense, even while Christ was here; else they would have learned nothing; and he was more fully in them when Christ had gone back to heaven; hence they learned, after Pentecost, more of the meaning of the gospel than they had ever gathered from the teaching of their Master.

**18, 19.** *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.*

There is a continuous sight of Christ even as there is a continuous life in Christ. They who have not received the life of Christ cannot see Christ. How can there be eyes without life, and how can there be the spiritual sight of Christ without the spiritual life in him?

**20.** *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

This is a wonderful trinity of unities, each one a mystery, but each one to be known by the believer when he is instructed of the Spirit of God: Christ in the Father, the saints in Christ, and Christ in them. He that experimentally knoweth what it is to be in Christ knoweth more than all the secular philosophers who have ever lived.

**21.** *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

Oh, what privileges are enjoyed by those who love the Lord Jesus Christ! We cannot help loving him, and by that love we are assured that the Father himself loves us, and we have the promise that Christ will yet more and more manifest himself to us.

**22.** *Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*

“Why are we the subjects of this election, this selection, this gracious manifestation?”

**23.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Just as the angels came to believing Abraham, and sojourned for a little while with him, so will Jesus and the Father, strangers in this world, become sojourners with us. Jesus says of the man who loves him, “My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” This is not a mere call, it is an abiding: “we will make our abode with him.” God, whom the heavens cannot contain yet comes and dwells in a lowly heart, and abides with a loving spirit: “We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” There is an aroma about these words which I cannot convey to you; but if you have the spiritual nostril, you will perceive their fragrance for yourselves.

**24.** *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.*

You see that the Lord Jesus Christ does not profess to be a great original thinker, but he speaks as the Messenger sent by the Father, and unless we also are commissioned and taught by the Father, of what value will our poor feeble thoughts be? Our only power lies in the fact that we do not utter our own thoughts, but the truths which

have been taught to us by the Holy Spirit. To some, this may look like weakness, but it is real strength.

**25-27.** *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, —*

When men in the East met one another, they usually gave the salutation, “Peace be unto you,” “Peace be to this house;” but Christ says: —

**27.** *My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

“I do not say, ‘Peace, Peace,’ where there is no peace. It is not a mere formal salutation, but there is a real, true peace communicated to you when I thus speak.”

**28.** *Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*

Love makes us rejoice in the prosperity of the one we love. The Lord Jesus Christ in coming to this earth, had taken upon himself a subordinate position: he had become the stepping-stone between man and God; but now that he was returning to his glory, returning to his Father, it was the bounder duty of those who loved him to rejoice, and we should do the same now. He has left behind him the humiliation, the scorn, the spitting, the crucifixion, and who among us, who truly loves him, would wish to bring him back to this poor earth as he came at first? Ah, no! It is well that all that is over, there is sweetest music to our ears in our Lord’s declaration, “It is finished;” and our soul swims in a sea of light as we think of the ineffable glory with the father to which he has returned for ever.

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

“Let us go to Gethsemane and to the Passion; let us go to fulfill the Father’s will.” It was a sure proof of Christ’s love when he went

forward from speaking to suffering that he might save his own forever.

### **JOHN 14:15-31**

**15.** *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

We cannot expect the Holy Spirit to dwell with us unless we are obedient to the commands of Christ. Our Saviour here tells us much about the spirit of truth, but he begins with this test of our love to him, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

**16.** *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

Not a different Comforter, but the Comforter who is now with us, is of the same nature, and works after the same manner, as the Lord Jesus himself, who was our first Advocate, Helper, Paraclete, Comforter: I give you these four words instead of one, because they are all wrapped up in the original word ‘Paraclete’-“that he may abide with you for ever and ever.” The Lord Jesus could not abide with us for ever, it was expedient for him that he should go to heaven to prepare a place for us. But the Holy Spirit will not go; he will remain in this dispensation, even to the end of it,-“that he may abide with you for ever.”

**17.** *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

The world knows nothing about the Holy Spirit; it can hear the gospel, it can hear the outward word, but the living, mystic, inward Spirit the world knows nothing of.

**18, 19.** *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.*

“While I am away the Holy Spirit shall be your Comforter, you shall not be like orphans without father or friend.” Jesus will come a second time. This is our joyful hope, but meanwhile, while he is away, we are not without a Comforter. “Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more.” What a wonderful thing! The children of God always see Jesus spiritually. “But ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also.” There is life in a look, and our continued sight of

Christ brings us continued life through Christ. Because he lives, there is a loving, living, lasting union between us and Christ.

**20.** *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

Three wonderful unions, Christ in the Father, his people in Christ, Christ in his people. If you are instructed of the Lord, you will understand this text. This is such knowledge as the universities cannot teach; it is such knowledge as the most-learned doctors cannot attain to by themselves.

Only the Spirit of God can teach us these things.

**21.** *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

He must have obedience. Christ cannot come and comfortably manifest himself to those who are living out of order and disregarding his words. Take heed, children of God, of disobedience; it is a discipline of the divine family that if we disobey we should lose the comfortable presence of our Lord. “I will manifest myself to him.”

**22, 23.** *Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Christ and his Father dwell with obedient people: “We will dwell with him, and make our abode with him.” Oh, that we might carefully watch our thoughts, our words, our acts, lest we grieve our Lord. He will manifest himself to us when we yield ourselves to him. When we obey his will, it will be his will to honour us with his constant presence.

**24.** *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings:*

There is much talk of loyalty to Christ, but the teachings of Christ are despised. The teachings of his apostles are the teachings of Christ they are but a prolongation and exposition of what Christ taught. In rejecting them we reject Christ. He will not have it that we can be loyal to him and yet refuse his teaching.

**24.** *And the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.*

It is a wonderful denial of originality on the part of Christ. If anybody could have spoken his own word, it was surely the Christ of God. But he was a messenger, and he delivered his message. Now, if it be so with Christ, how much more so with us who are very inferior messengers. We ought to be very careful that we do not deliver our own thoughts, or suggestions, excogitations and philosophies. "The word which ye hear is not mine," (that I can most emphatically say,) "but the Father's which sent me." You see, when we deliver a message which is not ours but the Father's, we feel safe about it; we feel sure of its success, whereas, if we were the makers of it, we should often question whether we had not told you falsely: but if we can fall back upon the Word of God, and prove it from what the Father has said, then do we feel we are no longer responsible.

**25, 26.** *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

That is the teaching. The Holy Spirit does not reveal anything fresh to us. He brings to our remembrance what has already been said and written in the inspired Word. Whereas the Book conveys to us the outward sense, the Holy Ghost conveys to us the inner meaning. The embodiment of truth you have in this Book, but the truth itself, dealing with the conscience, and heart, and spirit must be led home by the Author of the Book, by the Holy Ghost himself.

**27.** *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:*

Have you got it, brothers and sisters? Are you at peace at this moment? "I am very much troubled," says one. Well, you are to have tribulation here; but you are to have peace with it. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Christ you shall have peace. If you have got the bitter herbs, do not be satisfied with bitter herbs, ask for the Paschal Lamb.

**27.** *Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

Come, tell your trouble to your Lord, ask the Holy Spirit to exercise the office of Comforter upon you now at this very moment.

**28.** *Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*

The Lord Jesus had taken a subordinate place, he had become the servant of the Father, the messenger for the Father, but he was going back to reassume his glory. That ought to be a subject of joy to us. Let us bless Jesus that he is not here. If he were here in his former state he would be in his humiliation; but now he has gone to his glory. Let us rejoice in this.

**29.** *And now I have told you before it came to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.*

Jesus warned his disciples of all that was to happen in his death and in his departure. I believe that the Spirit of God often gives inward warnings to God's people of troubles that are to come, -monitions, so that they may be prepared for the trouble when it comes, and may feel as if he had told them before it came to pass.

**30.** *Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.*

He would have very few words, for he was going to the bloody sweat and scourging and death: his words might well be few, for his actions would speak more loudly than words.

**31.** *But that the world may know that I love the Father; and the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.*

And they left the supper-table to go to the garden, the garden of his agony. Let us be willing to go wherever God calls us.

### **JOHN 14:21-31**

In this "sacred farewell" talk of our Lord's, he gives us many a revelation of the soul's way of intercourse with him.

**21, 22.** *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them. he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*

Many a time have we asked that question with great admiration of the special sovereign grace of God, that he should manifest

himself to us, and not to the world. It is an unanswerable question. It is “even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

**23.** *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Where the grace of God has created love between us and Christ, there is a window through which Christ can manifest himself to us. Why he gave us that love we do not know, but when he has given us that love he will not deny us communion with himself.

**24-26.** *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye 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 Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

The Holy Spirit does not teach us any new doctrine. Fix that in your minds, for in the present age we have numbers of persons who talk about being inspired with the Holy Ghost, and who come with all kinds of crudities and fooleries. Believe them not. The Holy Ghost says no other and no more than the Lord Jesus Christ himself said, “He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you.” The canon of revelation is closed. None can add to it without a curse. Do not accept any testimony that would add to it. Keep you to what is here found, and pray the Holy Spirit to lead you into the clear understanding of it.

**27, 28.** *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*

Christ had himself less than the Father in his state of humiliation, and now he is returning to the Father to be re-clothed with honour and majesty. Should we not rejoice in that?

**29-31.** *And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in*

*me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so do I. Arise, let us go hence.*

And he went; to his death bravely determined, to do the Father's will, though it meant the drinking up of that bitter cup, which made his very soul to tremble within him. God give us such love to Christ as Christ had to the Father.

## **JOHN 15**

### **1. *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.***

Not only the Mosaic law, but the whole creation is full of types of Christ. All the vines that we see in this world are only as it were typical; but Christ is the substance,-the substance of nature as well as of grace: "I am the true vine," and the real Husbandman, who watches over everything, who has the whole Church, yea, the whole universe, under his care, is the great Father: "My Father is the husbandman."

### **2. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:***

It has no right to be there, for it is not there by a vital union; it will only harbor mischief if it is allowed to remain, therefore let it be taken away; and taken away it certainly will be by the Husbandman who makes no mistakes.

### **2. *And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.***

So there is taking away for the fruitless branches, and pruning for the fruit-bearing branches. Are you suffering under the pruning knife just now? Accept it joyfully. How much better that the knife should cut off your superfluities than that it should cut you off! The mercy is that, although God will purge and prune his vine-branches, he will not destroy them.

### **3. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.***

Christ had so dealt with his disciples that he left them like a pruned vine, ready and prepared for fruitfulness.

### **4. *Abide in me, and I in you.***

The pruning is nothing without the abiding in Christ. You may suffer again and again; but no good can come of it except you have vital, continuous, everlasting union with Christ. You cannot take a

branch away from the vine for a little while, and then put it back again; its life depends upon the perfect continuity of its union. So is it with us and Christ: the branch is in the vine, and the vine is in the branch. The very essence and sap of the vine are in the branch even as the branch is part and parcel of the vine.

**4, 5.** *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches:*

You are not the vine; do not think that you are; and if God blesses you, and makes you of some importance in the Church, yet do not dream that you are the Church, that you are the very root and stein of it. Ah, no! at the utmost, “ye are the branches.”

**5.** *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit:*

Oh, what a searching word is this! Are we bringing forth much fruit? I trust, dear brethren, that we are bringing forth some fruit; but, oh! what a test is this, “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.” Christ expects much from those who have this doubly high privilege of having him in them, and of being themselves in him.

**5, 6.** *For without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

And are there sufficient of them for that? It is enough to bring tears into one’s eyes to think that there should be enough fruitless, unabiding, merely nominal members of Christ to pay for gathering up to make a fire. Oh, sad, sad thing is this! It is the grief of the Church, it is the sorrow of God’s ministers, it ought to call for great self-examination in our own hearts that mere professors, those who apostatize after having made a profession of religion, do not seem to have been thought by the Saviour to be here and there one, but to be so many that “men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

**7.** *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

Power in prayer is dependent upon full enjoyment of union and communion with Christ. It is not every man who can ask of God

what he wills, and get it; but it is such a man, and such a man only, as shall be found abiding in Christ, and having Christ's words abiding in him. If we do not take notice of what Christ says, can we expect that he will take notice of what we say? If we do not obey him when he asks this and that of us, how can we reckon that he will give us this and that when we ask it of him? No, this is the condition of power in prayer, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

**8.** *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

You shall be known to be the disciples of the much fruit-bearing Saviour. He was no moderately good man, he was not one who was only a little useful in the world; but our blessed Master was perfectly consecrated, he abounded in every good word and work; and unless we are the same, how shall men think that we are his disciples?

**9.** *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:*

Matchless, matchless word! The love of God the Father to the Son is the immeasurable measure of the love of Christ to his people,-without beginning, without end, without change, without bounds. As the Father loved Christ, so has Christ loved us.

**9.** *Continue ye in my love.*

Abide in it, live in it as the fish lives in the stream, enjoy it, do nothing contrary to it.

**10, 11.** *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

When Christ cannot rejoice in us, you may rest assured that we cannot rejoice in ourselves; but when his grace so operates upon us that he sees that in us which gives him content, then it is that we shall feel a blessed content ourselves.

**12.** *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

I am sure you will never love each other too much. You cannot go beyond this rule: "Love one another, as I have loved you."

**13.** *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

What more has he that he can lay down when, having given up all else, he gives life itself for them?

**14.** *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

You cannot be his friends if you are disobedient to his commands. An act of disobedience is unfriendliness; ay, and the omission of obedience is unfriendliness to Christ. I wish we would always remember that every sin either of omission or of commission, is an unfriendly act towards our best Friend.

**15.** *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

The law made man do this and that, but it communicated very little of the secret counsels of God; but there is a holy familiarity between Christ and his people, a sacred confidence which Christ has manifested towards us in revealing the very heart of God to us, and therefore we are put upon a very high standing, not as servants now, but as friends. O friends of Christ, show yourselves friendly by your entire obedience to his gracious will!

**16.** *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

Fruitfulness, perseverance, and power in prayer, these are the priceless boons that come to us through our being one with Christ.

**17.** *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

As if there were many things in one in that command; It is but one command, but it is so comprehensive that all the commandments are fulfilled in this one: “that ye love one another.”

**18.** *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

So you need not be at all surprised if the world hates you.

**19.** *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

Therefore expect it, in some form or other, for you will be sure to meet with it. The seed of the serpent never will love the seed of the woman.

**20, 21.** *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin,”- as if all the rest would scarcely have been sin at all in comparison with that sin against the light which men committed after Christ had spoken to them. What a wonderful thing it is that the very word which is the creation of all good should, through the perversity of men's will, become also the creation of evil!

**22, 23.** *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also.*

There is a hatred of God in all hatred of the Mediator. Men may say that they love God, and yet despise Christ, but it cannot be so. Christ is so truly God, and so clear a manifestation of God, that, if men knew God, they would certainly hate him if they hate Christ.

**24-27,** *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shalt bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

## **JOHN 15**

Many of you know the words of this chapter by heart; you could repeat them without a mistake. May the savor of them abide in your hearts even as the letter of them abides in your memory!

**1.** *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.*

We thank thee, O Saviour, for this blessed answer to the oft-repeated question, “Which is the true Church?” Are you one with

Christ? Then are you a part of the true vine. If we have but real, vital personal, having connection with Christ, to whatever section of the visible Church we may belong, we are part of “the true vine.” And we are told, in the next sentence, who is the great Caretaker of the Church? Some of us are much occupied in Christ’s service, and there is a tendency with all of us to get, like Martha, “numbered” even in serving for him. We are apt to fancy that the burden of all the churches lies upon our shoulders, but, beloved, this is a great mistake. Jesus said, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman,” or vine-dresser. He will take the utmost possible care of it, for it is very dear to him. There is not a branch in that vine which the Father does not love with infinite affection; and as for the majestic stem, even Jesus, he loves him beyond measure.

*2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:*

This operation is always going on. God is continually taking away from the Church, in some way or other, non-fruit-bearers. We know that these do not truly belong to Christ, for fruit must come from vital union to him but it is a trial to the Church to have non-fruit-bearing branches. These are taken away, sometimes by death, sometimes by judgment, sometimes by the open discovery of their secret sin, the culmination of their backslides in overt acts of transgression. “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:” but side by side with this action another process is constantly going on: —

*2. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

Is this, then, dear friend, one reason why you are being chastened, —because you are a fruit-bearing branch? If you bore no fruit, you would be left unpruned, because the knife would do its sterner work upon you by taking you altogether away. If you really do bring forth fruit to God, you must expect to have trial, trouble, affliction, and that full often.

*3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

That was a “word” which had sorely grieved them, and cut them to the quick, so that the Saviour had to say to them, more than once, “Let not your heart be troubled.” (See the 1<sup>st</sup>, and the 27<sup>th</sup>, verses of the preceding chapter.) They had felt the sharp edge of the pruning-

knife, so Jesus said to them, “Now ye are clean (purged or pruned) through the word which I have spoken unto you.”

**4. *Abide in me, and I in you.***

The main thing is not restless activity, running here and there, and doing this, and that, and the other thing; it is abiding in Christ, persevering, constant cleaving to Christ, by virtue of a vital union with him: “Abide in me, and I in you.”

**4. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.***

You may hurry, and flurry, and worry; but you will lose by it. Keep close to Christ. Never let your heart be dissociated from intimate communion with him. So shall you bring forth fruit, but not else.

**5, 6. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.***

The vine is of use for nothing but fruit-bearing; and if it does not bear fruit, it is good for nothing except to be burned. In the social economy of life, a man may be of some use however bad he may be; but a man who is in the nominal Church of Christ, and yet does not bring forth fruit unto God, is of no use whatsoever. There is nothing to be done with him but to gather him up with the sere autumn leaves, and the decaying stalks of vegetation, to be burned in the corner outside the wall. How trying is the smoke that comes from such a burning as that! We pastors sometimes get it into our eyes, and it fills them with bitter tears. I know of nothing that is more grievous to us than this putting out of the unworthy, this casting the fruitless vine branches into the fire that they may be burned.

**7. *Ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, —***

You see that doctrinal vitality is necessary to true union to Christ. Some, in these days, talk about a spiritual attachment to the person of Christ, while they shoot their envenomed darts against the dogmas of Christ; but that will not do. “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,” — my words of doctrine, precept, or promise, then—

*7. Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

This is the secret of successful prayer. Christ listens to your words because you listen to his words. If you are conformed to his will, he will grant you your will. Disobedient children, when they pray, may expect to get the rod for an answer. In true kindness, God may refuse to listen to them until they are willing to listen to him.

*8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;*

What a wonderful vine that must be whose branches glorify God! Who ever heard of such a thing? The very branches do this, and they do it by bearing fruit. How this ought to excite us to desire to bear Christian graces, and to do Christian service, and to endure with resignation the Lord's will, for those are the clusters that hang upon this vine.

*8. So shall ye be my disciples.*

For Christ is not merely a fruit-bearer, but a bearer of much fruit. If we are to be Christ's disciples indeed, we must not be content with doing something for him, but we must do everything that is possible to us; and God can strengthen us till we shall get beyond our natural possibilities into a still loftier realm.

*9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*

As truly as the Father loves the Son, so truly does Jesus love us; nay, more than that, in the same manner as the Father loved the Son, — that is, without beginning, without cessation, without change, without end, without measure, — so does Jesus love us. There are many vast texts in the Bible, but I have often questioned whether there is a bigger text than this, — a vaster abyss of meaning shall not be found in these few words, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." "Continue ye in my love." Recognize it, enjoy it, walk in consistency with it, reflect it: "Continue ye in my love."

*10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*

I said just now that the doctrinal words of Christ were to be regarded by us. So, dearly-beloved, the precepts or commands of God must ever be regarded. It is an idle tale for men to talk of a mythical visionary love to Christ which does not result in obedience

to his will. We must keep his commandments, or we cannot truly say to him, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

**11.** *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

Good children are truly happy when their parents are happy in them. When they, through the good teaching and example of their parents, bring honour and joy to their parents, then they are sure to be themselves joyful. Oh, that we might so live that Christ's joy might abide in us, for then our joy would be full.

**12.** *This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you.*

Are you doing this, brethren and sisters in Christ, really loving one another? Do you never pick holes in each other's character? Do you never judge a fellow-Christian harshly? If you do these things, chide yourself, and cease from this evil habit at once, for your Lord says to you, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

**13.** *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." I lift you above the rank of servant, and make you my table companions, privileged to sit at the table with me in communion. I put you down on my list of associates and familiars, with whom I take sweet counsel, and in company with whom I walk to the house of God. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." This condition applies to the whole range of Christ's commands. We are not to omit any one of them, nor to make a little nick in our conscience as some do, nor to neglect what seems to be a comparatively small duty; for neglected duties, even of the lesser kind, often set upon us as little stones in a boot do upon a traveler. They lame him, they may not prevent him from traveling, but they mar his comfort on the road. Be scrupulous, brethren, lest, through the neglect of what some regard as scruples, you should bring upon yourselves great sorrows.

**14-16.** *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I*

*have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,*

“That is where the love began, — not with you, but with me.”

**16.** *And ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain:*

There are some people who are very fond of quoting the first part of this verse, they are very glad to hear a sermon upon the free, sovereign grace of God. They cannot too often repeat the words, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you;” but they do not talk so much about the next clause: “and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” Let us accept all God’s words as he has given them to us, and keep up the due proportion of the whole. Note that Christ is not speaking here of spasmodic piety, the religion that can only be kept up by popular preaching, and great meetings, and much excitement, and all that sort of thing; but of the religion of principle that bears its clusters tomorrow as well as today, and even months and years hence, — the religion that bears its fruit every month, and the leaf whereof doth not wither. May we be such branches in the true vine that our fruit shall thus remain.

**16.** *That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

For, where the fruit remains, power in prayer will remain. If we are constantly living unto God, we shall find ourselves privileged to have the ear of God; and when we pray to him, he will grant us the desire of our hearts.

**17.** *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

Our Lord repeated the command, for he knew how prone even his disciples would be to disobey it.

**18.** *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

It is no new thing for the ungodly to hate the godly, so let us not be surprised if that is our portion.

**19, 20.** *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have*

*persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.*

It ought to be quite sufficient for the servant if he is treated as his Lord was; what higher honour than that could he wish to have?

**21.** *But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sale, because they know not him that sent me.*

They professed to know God, and some of them even thought that they were rendering acceptable service to God when they rejected his Son, whom he had sent unto them.

**22-24.** *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.*

Our Lord did not mean that they would have been sinless if he had not come to them, but that his coming, and their rejection of him, had enormously increased and intensified their sinfulness.

**25.** *But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.*

They fulfilled what had been written long before, even as they afterwards did when they put Christ to death.

**26, 27.** *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

The witness of the Spirit of truth still continues, and Christ's disciples are still privileged to be co-witnesses, even wilt the Holy Spirit himself; let us take care to avail ourselves of this privilege whenever we can.

## **JOHN 15:1-8**

**1.** *I am the true vine,*

Now we know where to find the true Church. It is to be found only in Christ and in those who are joined to him in mystical but real union: "I am the true vine,"

**1.** *And my Father is the husbandman.*

Now we know who is the true Guardian of the Church. Not the so-called “holy father” at Rome, but that Father above, who is the true Guardian, Ruler, Keeper, Preserver, Purifier, Husbandman of the one Church, the vine.

*2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:*

There are many such branches, in Christ’s visible Church, which are not fruit-bearing branches, and consequently are not partakers of the sap of life and grace which flows into the branches that are vitally joined to the central stem. These fruitless branches are to be taken away.

*2. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

There is some work, then, for the knife upon all the branches; cutting off for those that are fruitless, cutting for those that are bearing some fruit, that they may bring forth yet more.

*3. Now ye are clean [purged] through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

The Word is often the knife with which the great Husbandman prunes the vine; and, brothers and sisters, if we were more willing to feel the edge of the Word, and to let it cut away even something that may be very dear to us, we should not need so much pruning by affliction. It is because that first knife does not always produce the desired result that another sharp tool is used by which we are effectually pruned.

*4. Abide in me, and I in you.*

“Do not merely find a temporary shelter in me, as a ship runs into harbour in stormy weather, and then comes out again when the gale is over; but cast anchor in me, as the vessel does when it reaches its desired haven. Be not as branches that are tied on, and so can be taken off, but be livingly joined to me. ‘Abide in me.’”

*4. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

You must bear fruit, or else be cast away; but you cannot bear any fruit except by real union and constant communion with Jesus Christ your Lord

**5.** *I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

Not merely will you do very little, but you can do nothing at all if you are severed from Christ. You are absolutely and entirely dependent upon Christ both for your life and for your fruit-bearing. Do we not wish to have it so, beloved? It is the incipient principle of apostasy when a man wishes to be independent of Christ in any degree, when he says, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me that I may have something in hand, some spending money of my own." No; you must, from day to day, from hour to hour, and even from moment to moment, derive life, light, love, everything that is good, from Christ. What a blessing that it is so!

**6.** *If a man, abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

There is a sad future in store for tares, according to another parable; but, somehow, there is a much sadder lot reserved for those that were, in some sense, branches of the vine,— those who made a profession of faith in Christ, though they were never vitally united to him; those who for a while did run well, yet were hindered. What was it that hindered them that they should not obey the truth? Oh, it is sad indeed that any should have had any sort of connection with that divine stem, and yet should be cast into the fire!

**7.** *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

Do not think that all men can pray alike effectually, for it is not so. There are some whom God will hear, and some whom God will not hear. And there are some even of his own children, whom he will hear in things absolutely vital and essential, to whom he never gave carte blanche after this fashion: "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." No, if you will not hear God's words, he will not hear yours; and if his words do not abide in you, your words shall not have power with him. They may be directed to heaven, but the Lord will not listen to them so as to have regard unto them. Oh, it needs very tender walking for one who would be mighty in prayer! You shall find that those who have had their will at the throne of grace are men who have done God's will in other places; it

must be so. The greatest favourite at court will have a double portion of the jealousy of his monarch, and he must be specially careful that he orders his steps aright, or else the king will not continue to favor him as he was wont to do. There is a sacred discipline in Christ's house, a part of which consists in this, that, as our obedience to our God declines, so will our power in prayer decrease at the same time.

**8.** *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

If we are his true disciples, we also shall bring forth much fruit.

### **JOHN 15:1-8**

On the way from the supper table to the garden of Gethsemane, or while still lingering in the upper room, our Lord spoke this wondrous parable.

**1.** *I am the true vine,-*

All other vines are but shadows of Christ. They represent Christ, but he is himself the substance. the essence, the one great reality. He is the truth of all things that exist: "I am the true Vine." Does anybody ask which is the true Church? All who are vitally joined to Christ are in the true Church, for he says, "I am the true Vine,"-

**1.** *And my Father is the husbandman.*

He cares for the Church with infinite wisdom and love. No one else can care for that true Vine as the Father-the Husbandman-does.

**2.** *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:*

If there be any, who are only nominally in Christ, and who therefore bear no fruit, their doom is to be taken away; for, in order to final perseverance and eternal safety, there must be fruit-bearing.

**2.** *And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

Pruning, then, is for fruit-bearers. If the branch were dead, what would be the good of pruning it? Say not, dear friends that your afflictions must be caused by your sins; nay, rather they may come in consequence of your virtues. Because you do bear fruit, it is worth while for the Husbandman to use his knife upon you, that you may bring forth more fruit.

**3, 4.** *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you.*

Give good heed to that sweet word, beloved brethren, "Abide in me." Do not seem to get into Christ, and then depart from him. Add constancy to all your other graces.

**4, 5.** *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit for without me ye can do nothing.*

You know how the branch is in the vine, it is a component part of the vine; but do not forget that the vine is also in the branch,-that the sap, which is the very life of the vine, flows into every living branch. So we are in Christ, and Christ is in us, and he says to us, as the marginal reading has it, "Severed from me, ye can do nothing." What! not even a little, Lord? Can we not do something good, something acceptable apart from thee? No; "Without me, ye can do nothing."

**6.** *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

That is all that can be done with fruitless vine-branches. You cannot make anything of them. Other trees yield timber, and are useful for various purposes; but, with the vine, it is as the prophet Ezekiel says, "Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?" It is useless if it is fruitless; and so is it with us, if we do not bear fruit unto God, we are of no service to him whatsoever.

**7.** *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

Here is the secret of prevailing prayer. It is not every man who chooses to pray, who shall have whatever he asks of God; but the successful pleader is the man who abides in Christ, and in whom Christ's words abide. God will not hear our words if we disregard his words. We cannot expect our prayers to be prevalent if we are severed from our Lord.

8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

“Much fruit” should be produced by the disciples of the much-doing Christ.

The true Vine was full of fruit, and it scarcely can be believed that we are branches of that Vine if we exhibit only a little fruit. It is “much fruit” that proves our union to this Vine.

## JOHN 15:1-11

1. *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.*

All other vines were but types and shadows; Christ is the substance; God’s ideal vine; “the true vine.” Israel was a vine; — the figure is a common one throughout the Old Testament; — but it was a false vine, and it bore bitter grapes.

2. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:*

The true description of a real saint is that he is in Christ, that he abides in Christ, and that he bears fruit unto Christ. Where there are not these three things, there is no real saintship, and so the man is taken away. Whatever he seemeth to be, and seemeth to have, he is taken away. Oh, the sad loss of many professors in being taken away! What a terrible doom, to have had a name to live, and then to be taken away!

2. *And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

The vine is very apt to become unclean and unhealthy; there are all sorts of creatures that love to suck its juices, so that even the most fruitful bough needs to be cleansed. Besides, the vine has a great tendency to run to wood, so the pruning-knife must be used very sharply. It will be used upon all who are really in Christ, and who are abiding in Christ.

3. *Now ye are clean —*

Those to whom the Saviour spoke: “Now ye are clean” —

3. *Through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

That is the great purger. Affliction is used, but it is rather the handle of the knife than the knife itself.

4. *Abide in me, —*

“Now that ye are clean, do not imagine that you can do without me: Abide in me,” —

**4.** *And I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

It is not a transient faith, it is not saying, “I was converted so many years ago;” but it is a living faith, an abiding faith, a constant vital union with Christ that marks the true heir of heaven.

**5.** *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

“Severed from me, ye can bear no fruit whatever. Not only can ye not do much, but ye can do nothing apart from me.”

**6.** *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered;*

As I have already reminded you, it is only an abiding faith that is a real faith, the faith that remains fixed in Christ the vital union with Christ maintained day by day.

**6-11.** *And men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciple. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

If you are Christ’s disciples now, you are to keep on being his disciples,

and to grow more and more so as the years advance.

## **JOHN 15:1-11**

**1.** *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.*

If you want to know where the true Church is, Christ here tells you: “I am the true vine.” All who are in Christ are in the true Church. If you want to know who is the Father of the Church, its Keeper and Guardian, Christ here tells you: “My Father is the husbandman.” Hence, I feel persuaded that the true vine, the

Church, will never die, for it is Christ; and I am also persuaded that it will never be uprooted, for Jesus says, "My Father is the husbandman;" and that fact is a guarantee that he will take care of it.

**2.** *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:*

In some sense, men and women may be in Christ by a mere outward profession; but if they have no evidence of a real union to Christ, if they produce no fruit, they will be taken away, some by death, and others by apostasy; but they will be taken away.

**2.** *And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit!.*

From these words, it is clear that, many of the afflictions which we have to endure are not brought upon us because we are unfruitful, but because we are bearing fruit.

**3, 4.** *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

Dear friends, beware of a Christless Christianity. Beware of trying to be Christians without living daily upon Christ. The branch may just as well try to bear fruit apart from the vine as for you to hope to maintain the reality of Christian life without continual fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

**5, 6.** *I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

The vine must either bear fruit or be good for nothing; and you, believer, must be vitally united to Christ, and bear fruit in consequence of that union or else you will be like those fruitless vine-branches, of which our Lord said that "men gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned,"

**7.** *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.*

Do not take that verse as a promise of unlimited answers to prayer, for it is nothing of the kind. Remember the "if" that qualifies it: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you," for a man who is

truly in Christ, as the branch is in the vine, and who is feeding upon Christ's words, will be so influenced by the Holy Spirit that he will not ask anything which is contrary to the mind of God. Consequently, his prayers, though in one sense unrestricted, are really restricted by the tenderness of his conscience, and the sensitiveness of his spirit to the influence of the mind of God. There are some Christians who do not get their prayers answered, and who never will as long as they do not comply with this condition, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you." If you do not take notice of Christ's words, he will not take notice of your words. He is not going to open his door to every stranger who chooses to give a runaway knock at it, but he will pay attention to his own children who pay attention to him.

**8.** *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

"Ye shall be known to be my disciples." Everybody will perceive that you must be branches of that fruitful vine, Christ Jesus, if ye bear much fruit.

**9.** *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*

How wondrously Jesus loves those who are truly, his! As the Father loved him, so does he love us: that is, without beginning, without measure, without variation, without end. "Continue ye in my love;" that is, live in it, enjoy it, drink it in, be influenced by it.

**10.** *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;*

"You shall live in the realization of my love if you live in obedience to me."

**10, 11.** *Even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

For, when Christ is not pleased with us, we are not likely to have joy in ourselves, Oh, that we may so live as to please Christ!

## **JOHN 15:1-17**

Thus speaks the Lord Jesus: —

**1.** *I am the true vine,*

Many questions have been raised about which is the true Church; the Saviour answers them, "I am the true vine." All who are united, really united, to the ever-living Saviour are members of the true Church. Find ye them where ye may, if they are one with Christ, they are his — they are parts of the divine vine; they are belonging to his Church.

*1. And my Father is the husbandman.*

It is the Father's province, by the Holy Spirit and by the works of Providence, to see to the prosperity of the Church. "My Father is the husbandman." All preachers, all teachers, are but, so to speak, the pruning tool in the hand of the great vine-dresser. "My Father is the husbandman."

*2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:*

It is a necessary part of vine-dressing to remove the superfluous shoots. Too much wood-making, which does not lead to fruit-bearing, is but a waste of strength. And so in the Church there are those that bear no fruit, and for a while they appear to be fresh and green, and they who are the under-vine-dressers dare not take them away. But the Father does it —sometimes by removing them by death; at other times by permitting them openly to expose their own character, until they are then amenable to the discipline of the Church, and are removed.

*2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away and every branch that beareth fruit —*

What of that? "He purgeth it (pruneth it) that it may bring forth more fruit." "I cannot understand," said one to me the other day, "why I am so very sorely afflicted. I have been searching myself to discover what sin can have been the cause of it." Now, beloved, if that be your question tonight, there may be a sin to be put away, and, if so, God forbid that I should prevent your searching; but remember, on the other hand, affliction is no evidence of sin, but oftentimes of the very contrary, It is the fruit-bearing branch that gets the pruning. You are so good a branch that God would fain have you better. You have such capacities for bearing fruit, that he wants to see those capacities developed. The lapidary does not chase upon the wheel the stone that is not precious, but that which is, and so real affliction is no mark, therefore, of your want of grace, but of

your having it. "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

**3. *Now ye are clean--***

For so it should be.

**3. *Through the word which I have spoken unto you.***

While Christ was with his disciples he kept his vine continually pruned by the word which he spoke. That word cut off the non-fruit-bearing-branches, for we read that after that saying there were some that went back, and walked no more with him, for they said, "This is a hard saying; who can bear it?" That was the word pruning off the useless branches. And there were others who were grieved by his Word. These, were good people, and it did them good. It was a godly sorrow that led to bringing forth fruits meet for repentance.

**4. *Abide in me and I in you.***

There is the great canon of the Christian life. Hold fast to Christ. Not only live with him, but live in him. "Abide in me." And on! let Jesus not be merely your companion now and then, on holy occasions, but let him abide in you; make your heart a temple; let him find his sweetest rest his home in you.

**4. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.***

It is keeping in Christ, then, that is the vital relater. There is the root of the whole business, to be still one with Jesus by vital union, deriving the sap of our life entirely from him.

**5. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit:***

This double abiding gives a double harvest. Christ in me, and I in Christ — I must be fruitful. Oh! beloved, look well to this. I am afraid we get at a distance from Christ. There is more danger of this in old professors than there is in young beginners. The young beginner is warm of heart. The very novelty of the thing keeps him near his Master, but oh! take care of slackening; you that have been long pilgrims, take care of slackening. It is so easy to grow cold in this cold world, and it is so hard to maintain the holy spiritual fervent, without which there is no spiritual health.

**5. *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.***

Not “ye will do less,” or “ye will do least,” but ye can do nothing —nothing good, nothing spiritual, nothing acceptable, if severed from Jesus.

**6.** *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

And oh! how many come to this end! They did seem to be all that the fruit-bearing branches are, but they were never saved souls, for saved souls always bring forth fruits of righteousness. Their salvation is proved by their fruitfulness. But these appeared to be all that the others were, and after a while they were discovered, and cast into the fire and burned.

**7.** *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,*

My very words. You must treasure up Christ’s teaching; you must obey his precepts. If ye do this, “Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” In this chapter we are taught once or twice that the power of prayer depends very much upon the closeness of our communion with Christ, and the completeness of our obedience to him. We are saved by faith in the Redeemer, but the joy of salvation, the very dignity and glory of it, will only come to those men who jealously watch themselves, and zealously obey their Lord and Master.

**8, 9.** *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:*

What a glorious word! I scarcely know a text more deep, more full than this. After the same manner as God the Father loves the Son — after that same sort does the Son love us. Hear ye the words again, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love.” He confirms us in it, and bids us live in the enjoyment of it.

**10.** *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.*

Ye shall know it; ye shall live in it; it shall be the atmosphere you breathe.

**10, 11.** *Even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you.*

Christ would have his people happy; happy, however, with a holy joy, which is not, therefore, a dim and second-rate joy. It is the very joy of Christ, God's people are to enjoy.

**11-16.** *That my joy might remain in you. and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

A second time he puts this remarkable prevalence of prayer side by side with walking in the Lord's commandments. Oh! ye that miss success in your life and work, may you not trace your failure to your forgetfulness of God. Shall God do your will, if you will not do his will? Shall he wait on you, if you will not wait on him? Will he not (must you not expect that he will) walk contrary to you if you walk contrary to him? May Spirit make you pure in life, for then shall you be successful at the mercy-seat!

**17.** *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

Jesus! send us this spirit of love, we pray thee. Amen.

## **JOHN 15:9-27**

**9.** *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:*

Oh, drink this nectar down! It is as when Cleopatra dissolved the pearl into a single draught; for here is the choicest pearl of truth that ever was dissolved into a single verse to be a delicious draught for his people to drink: "As the Father hath loved me," — as surely as the Father hath loved me; and, then, "as"— that is,— in the same manner "as the Father hath loved me," — without beginning, without ending, Without measure, without change, "so have I loved you."

**9, 10.** *Continue ye in my love. If ye keep any commandments, ye shall abide in my love;*

Note this point of the Lord's discipline; — not that Christ ever casts away his people, but that he does take from them the sweet sense of his love, the realization of it, if they are disobedient to him, and keep not his commandments.

**10, 11.** *Even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you,*

That he might joy in us,— feel a sacred delight in thinking of us as he does when he sees us keeping his commandments, and treasuring up his words, and so living in his love, and being mighty in prayer.

**11.** *And that your joy might be full.*

If Christ is not pleased with us, we cannot be glad; and if he has no joy in us, we cannot have joy in him. These two things rise and fall together. When the father of the family looks with joy upon his boy, then the boy is happy; but when the father has no joy in his son, then be sure of this, the son has no joy in his father, but he is sad at heart. O God, may we never grieve thee, for if we do, we shall be ourselves grieved; at least, I trust that we shall, we would not have it otherwise. But, oh! that we might have the testimony that Enoch had before his translation, that we have pleased God!

Then shall we have true pleasure in ourselves.

**12-14.** *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

Obedience, then, is rewarded with a holy friendship, for Christ becomes in the highest sense our Friend; but we are not his friends till we cease to delight in sin, and turn away from it into the paths of holiness.

**15.** *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

The servant works in a building, and it is enough for him that he is laying part of a line of brick or stone. Perhaps he has never seen the design of the structure, nor had a wish to do so. But you and I have the great Architect constantly coming to us to tell us what the

building is to be, and to explain to us his plans, and so we work with greater pleasure and joy than a mere labourer might. The very heart of Christ is laid bare to his people: “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.” Happy are his people; glad to be his servants,—gladder still to be his friends.

**16.** *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

There you see divine election leading on to fruit-bearing, and perpetuated in perseverance: “that your fruit should remain.” It brings also to every one of its objects this conspicuous favor, prevailing power in prayer: “that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

**17.** *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

O you professors, who have no love to one another, you are breaking the King’s commandment! You are living in direct violation of a plain command that is most dear to his heart. Oh, that we might constantly hear it and obey it! “These things I command you, that ye love one another.”

**18.** *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

That is what you have reason to expect, and you may feel honoured if they treat you as they have treated your Lord.

**19-22.** *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.*

There is an awful increase of sin produced by Christ speaking to a man; and if any of you have been very near to the Kingdom, and your conscience has been aroused, and your mind has been impressed by the truth, and yet you have gone back to your sin, you

have multiplied that sin a thousandfold. The times of your ignorance God may have winked at; but now you are sinning against light and knowledge; and unless you repent, terrible will be your doom.

**23-26.** *He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come,*

And he has come; he is here, he has never been taken away; he still abides with and in the Church.

**26.** *Whom I'll send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

By this mark you may know whether that which has been taught you is of the Spirit of God. If it does not testify of Christ, if he is not the head and front of it all, there is nothing in it for you to accept. If any man comes to you with what he calls a revelation, if it is not all concerning Christ, by this shall you judge it; it is not of the Spirit of God if it does not testify of Christ.

**27.** *And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

May we all bear witness according as we have been with Christ, for there is no bearing witness to Christ unless we have first been with him.

## **JOHN 15:12-27**

**12.** *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

O beloved, do keep this commandment! Overlook each other's infirmities. Bear with each other's faults. Love one another as Christ has loved us.

**13-15.** *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

“I have explained myself to you in such a way that I have proved that you are my friends. A master sets his servant to work without explaining what his object is in that work, but I have explained to you what my Father’s design is. Therefore, you are my friends.”

**16-21.** *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me. We cannot expect, therefore, to receive honour, and to wear a crown of gold where Jesus wore a crown of thorns.

**22-24.** *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin:*

They would have been comparatively free from sin.

**24-26.** *But now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

Notice that blessed truth,—that even that Divine Person, the Holy Ghost, when he comes to visit us, has nothing better to speak of than our Lord Jesus Christ: “He shall testify of me.” Even the

Holy Spirit, when he exercises the function of the Comforter, testifies of Christ. Is he not the consolation of Israel? Well did the poet write

“Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,  
We love to hear of thee;  
No music’s like thy charming name,  
Nor half so sweet can be.”

*27. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning*

## **JOHN 16**

*1. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*

That you should not be scandalized when you are put to suffering on any account — that you should not dread the offence of the cross, and turn aside because of it. How considerate our Master is! It seems as if he might be angry at us if he suspected that we could be offended by anything that he did or suffered, or that we had to suffer for him; but he knows the weakness of our flesh, and, therefore, he speaks with so much elaboration of comfort.

*2-4. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.*

When you meet with rebuke, and slander, and jesting, and jeering against you for Christ’s sake, he has told you of them.

“Temptation or pain — he has told you no less;  
The heirs of salvation, you know from his word,  
Through much tribulation must follow their Lord.”

*4. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.*

While they had his presence, he was like a wall of fire round about them. They did not want to be protected then from dangers not come. And the Lord has not told us yet some of the things which he will reveal to us by and by, because the trial has not come. You feel as if you could not die at peace just now. You dread death. You

shall have dying grace in dying moments. Do not be questioning yourself as to whether you have got dying grace now. You do not want it yet. You shall have it when the time comes.

**5, 6.** *But now I go my way to him that sent me: and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*

It often happens, that if we were to inquire a little more into the sorrow, it would vanish. They did not ask him why he went away. They fretted because he was going. Now he tells them where he was going.

**7.** *Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

It is a better thing for us in this world to have the Holy Spirit in us than to have the corporeal presence of Christ with us. We are better helped by the Holy Spirit than we should have been if Jesus had remained on earth.

**8-12.** *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me: Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.*

Partly because their sorrow incapacitated them for hearing any more; partly because their spiritual infancy did not permit them as yet to learn the deeper doctrines which are rather meat for men than milk for babes. O you that are teachers of others, imitate the prudence of Jesus. Do not teach people too much at once. Do not try to make a little child understand all that an advanced and experienced saint knows. Say, as your Master did, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

**13, 14.** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me:*

Now that is a sure mark of the Holy Spirit. If there be any spirit, which does not glorify Christ, it is not the Holy Spirit; it is not the

Comforter. If you hear any doctrine which detracts from the dignity of Christ's nature, from the glory of Christ's person, from the perfection and the necessity of Christ's sacrifice, you may depend upon it that it is not the doctrine of God. Reject it at once. It may poison you. It cannot build you up. "He shall glorify me."

**14, 15.** *For he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

The things of the Father are Christ's. We learn them as Christ's. The Spirit brings them to us as Christ's, and so Christ is glorified, and we are comforted.

**16-19.** *A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him.*

And that is a very sweet thing. Sometimes we are afraid to pray; sometimes we feel as if we could not bring ourselves to the prayer. But it is so sweet. "Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him." There is the essence of prayer in the desire to pray. There is really a request which Jesus Christ can read in the heart that longs to make a request and scarcely dares do it.

**19, 20.** *And said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

Not merely shall your sorrow be taken away, but it shall be transformed. As the alchemist thought that he turned baser metal into gold, so in very truth by a heavenly alchemy does Christ turn the sorrow of his people not in this case only, but in many others, into joy.

**21-24.** *A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she*

*remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name.*

They had asked so little that it came to nothing, and they had not yet learned the art of using his name in prayer; and a great many Christians have not learned it yet. Often they say, and they say very properly, “for Jesus Christ’s, sake.” That is good, but there is something better than to ask in his name. Suppose a person calls at any door and asks me to relieve him, out of love to some friend of mine. That is very well; but suppose he says, “I come from that friend of yours, and he told me to use his name, and to put whatever you did for me to his account. Why, that is a stronger plea altogether. Happy are they who know how to use the name, the authority, the claims, the rights of Jesus as an argument with which to back their prayers.

**24.** *Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

You have got some joy, but there is room for more. Brethren, has your joy ever been full yet? Full? Could not you be more joyous? Oh! there have been times with some of us when we could not be more joyous than we were. We have asked, and we have received, and we have been so glad, that we hardly knew how to live under the blessed delirium of gladness. We have seemed to be carried away with an intense delight because God has heard our prayers. “That your joy may be full.”

**25.** *These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs:*

In short, parabolic sentences.

**25-27.** *But the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.*

That is a very precious truth. While Jesus does pray the Father for us, yet we are not to look upon that as if Christ’s prayer made the Father love us. No. Not only is it not Christ’s prayer that makes

the Father love us. It is not even Christ's death that makes the Father love us. Often do we repeat that verse: —

“Twas not to make the Father's love  
Towards his people flame,  
That Jesus, from the realms above,  
On the kind errand came.  
'Twas not the pangs that he endured,  
Nor all the woes he bore,  
That God's eternal love procured,  
For God was love before.”

It is an exposition and display of the Father's love; and the prayer of Christ, though blessedly useful, does not make the Father love us, or willing to grant the request. “For the Father himself loveth you.” Notice the blessed condescension of Christ that he should mention his people's virtues. He says to these men that had been with him, who really do not seem as if they had loved him very much, and certainly were not very strong in faith, but were often in such a state of unbelief that he had to say, “Where is your faith?” Yet he says, “The Father himself loveth you because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.”

**28-31.** *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?*

Are you at this moment full of faith? Do not trust yourselves. Do not begin to glory in the strength of your faith.

**32.** *Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*

Oh! you that say you believe tonight, beware lest tomorrow you should be scattered in unbelief and fear. Whatever faith we have is God's giving, and if it remain with us, it will be because God keeps it there. But there is not one among us that has any faith to spare. We do not know but that the very hour is come, even now, that will try us and make us ask whether we have any faith at all.

**33.** *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.*

There is a blessed word of good cheer for us, everyone!

## **JOHN 16**

**1.** *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*

The temptation is, when Christ is despised and rejected, for our hearts to begin to sink, and for our faith to fail. Therefore did Christ warn his disciples that they “should not be offended.”

**2.** *They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*

The best of men are but men at the best, and they are very apt to fail when they find persecution hot against them, especially when even religious men, of a certain kind, count it to be a religious duty to persecute the people of God.

**3.** *And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

This verse reminds us of our Lord’s prayer on the cross, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Persecution of God’s people usually arises from ignorance of God the Father and God the Son.

**4.** *But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.*

“I was your Protector; by my personal presence, I so sustained your hearts that it did not matter what trouble you fell into; but now I am going away, and therefore I give you this warning.”

**5, 6.** *But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*

We sometimes endure a needless sorrow, for the asking of a single question might remove it. Our Lord says to his disciples, “If you knew where I was going, and understood my motive in going, your sorrow at my departure would be assuaged.”

*7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away:*

“It is for your profit to lose my personal presence, precious as that has been to you.”

*7. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

The word “Comforter” might just as well have been translated “Advocate.” The Holy Spirit is that Divine Advocate who pleads the cause of God in us, and for us, and so comforts us. He it is who is now with Us. If Jesus Christ were still upon earth in the flesh, he could only be in one place at one time. If he were in this assembly, he could not also be in Jerusalem or in New York; but the Comforter can be in all the gatherings of the Lord’s people, and with each individual believer, the wide world over.

*8-12. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

Teachers, learn wisdom from Christ. He did not try to teach his disciples everything at once; but, by teaching them one truth, he prepared them for another truth. Let us do the same with those whom we try to teach, let us dispense to them the simpler truths first, and afterwards those that are deeper and more mysterious.

*13,14. Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

That spirit, which does not glorify Christ, is not the spirit of God. Hereby shall ye discern between the spirit of error and the Spirit of truth.

*15, 16. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.*

This is what our whole life is: “a little while.” But in that little while there are little whiles of sadness, and little whiles of gladness, — little whiles in which we have Christ with us, and little whiles in which we see him, but find him not. Blessed be God, we are going away from the land of these changing little whiles up to the place where the sun shineth in its strength for ever and ever.

**17, 18.** *Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and, again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.*

Sometimes, when you are reading the Bible, you will come across a text of which you will say to yourselves, “What is this? We cannot tell what he saith.” But do not give up reading the Bible because you cannot understand it. There is a great deal that a father says which his child cannot comprehend, yet it is a part of the child’s education to be with his father, and to hear some things that he does not at first understand; but by-and-by, it all becomes clear. So, believer, what thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter.

**19.** *Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him*

They did not ask him, but they desired to do so, and a desire is a prayer. Where our blessed Master is present, the very desires of his people are prayers, even though their lips remain closed.

**19, 20.** *And said unto them, Do you enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

Oh, what a blessed promise!

**21-24.** *A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he*

*will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall, receive, that your joy may be full.*

They had asked very little, and they had never asked even that little in Christ's name; and there are but few Christians who do so even now. They ask for Christ's sake, which is a good plea, but to ask in Christ's name is better still, — when you feel conscious that you have Christ's authority to use his name, and so can put the King's own signature at the bottom of your petitions. There are some prayers to which a man dares not to set Christ's seal; but when the prayer is such that Christ himself might have offered it, then we may present it in his name, and we may be certain that we shall receive what we have asked.

**25-28.** *These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself teacheth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

Here are four unfathomable depths: "I came forth from the Father," —there is Christ's eternal pre-existence. "And am come into the world," —there is his incarnation. "Again, I leave the world," — there is his death, resurrection, and ascension into the glory of God. "And go to the Father," — there is his exaltation to the Father's right hand.

**29.** *His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.*

Did you never, when reading the Bible, come across a text, that was opened up to you so sweetly that you vied out just as these disciples did "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb."

**30, 31.** *Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?*

Listen, you who imagine that you are so strong in faith, and every grace, that you think you are almost perfect: "Do ye now believe?"

**32.** *Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone:*

Ah, me! these were the men who said they believed in him; yet, in his time of trial, they fled like cowardly unbelievers. God help us, and sustain us, or we shall do as they did!

**32, 33.** *And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

### **JOHN 16:1-14**

**1-3.** *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

True followers of Christ must not reckon upon having the world's commendation. At first, the Jews persecuted the Christians; then the Romans took up the cruel work, and others have continued it, in some form or other, even to this day, for the persecution of the saints has not yet ceased. There are many who still have hard times, and have to endure trials of cruel mockings for Christ's sake. If you resolve to follow Christ men will be sure to call you old-fashioned, ridiculous, Puritanic, and I know not what besides, yet what does it matter to you if they do? Your Master foretold that it would be so.

**4.** *But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning because I was with you.*

Christ did not deceive his disciples concerning the treatment that would be meted out to them. He did not promise that the road to heaven would be an easy path, or flatter his followers with the notion that the cross, which they had to carry after him, had no weight in it; "These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them."

**5, 6.** *But now I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*

They were thinking more of their loss by his going away from them than of his gain in going back to his Father. If they had thought of the glory into which he was so soon to enter, they would have ceased to sorrow, and would have rejoiced with exceeding joy, but they seem to have loved themselves better than they loved their Lord; hence his absence, which ought to have given them many reasons for rejoicing, became to them a cause for grief.

*7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away:*

“It is not merely for my own glory that I am going away, but my absence from you will be better for you than my continued bodily presence with you could possibly be.”

*7. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

“And he will be of more service to you than I could be even if I were to remain with you.” The presence of the Spirit of God in the Church is better for the present dispensation than even the bodily presence of Christ would be.

**8-12.** *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

“You have not yet received the Spirit of God as you shall do after my departure, and then your capacities shall be enlarged, so that you shall be able to understand deep truths which are altogether beyond your comprehension at present.”

**13.** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

Is not that wonderful? As Jesus Christ said that he did not bear witness to himself, but spoke the words which his Father had given him, so the Spirit of God does not speak of himself, but he bears witness to the truth which Christ has revealed, and also makes known “things to come.” But he will never reveal anything contrary to that which Christ has revealed in his Word. That which is to be revealed is that truth which was from the beginning. As we are

taught it by the Divine Spirit, it becomes fresh truth to us, though it was ever in Christ's eternal mind.

*14. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

Oh, that this blessed Spirit may continually show the things of Christ to us!

## **JOHN 16 1-16**

*1. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*

Or, "made to stumble." Christ would not have you who are his people caused to stumble by anything that happens to you. He wants you to walk without tripping; his angels bear you up in their hands lest at any time you should dash your foot against a stone. He himself, as your Guardian, comes and speaks beforehand to let you know what is to occur to you, that you may not be caused to stumble by any fresh trial that may assail you.

*2. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*

Christ's disciples were to expect opposition of the most cruel kind. They were to be put away from those with whom they had long worshipped; they were even to run the risk of losing their lives; but Jesus foretold what would happen to them, that they might not be stumbled at it. Such was their Lord's love to them that he would not have them attacked unawares; by his grace, they would hold on, and hold out, they would persevere to the end; but there would have to be a struggle, and to help them in the fight, Jesus tells them all about it before it begins. We say, "Forewarned, forearmed." So the disciples were; and so are you. Your Lord tells you that you will not get to heaven without trials: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." And he tells you this that it may not surprise you when it comes, that it may not act upon you like a sudden gust of wind that would upset a little ship; but that you may just keep everything in trim looking for the storm to come: "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be caused to stumble."

*3. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

The persecuting Jews professed to be worshippers of Jehovah; but they did not know the Christ, whom he sent, and, therefore, in very truth they did not know the Father either. How can you expect that those who do not know the Father will know the Son, or any of the other children of the divine family? As they rejected the Elder Brother, will they not also reject the younger ones? Is the disciple to be above his Master, or the servant to be treated better than his Lord? Think not so; and therefore expect that you will not be known, even as the Father and the Son were not known.

“Tis no surprising thing,

That we should be unknown:

The Jewish world knew not their King,  
God’s everlasting Son.”

*4. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.*

Our Lord did tell his disciples something about “these things.” He did warn them to expect opposition, but he did not dwell upon that theme, he did not expatiate upon it. He did not at first give that prominence to it which he was about to do, and he explains to his disciples why he had not talked much upon that topic: “because I was with you.” It did not matter how they were opposed so long as he was with them; his society more than made up for anything they might have to suffer; and, dear child of God, if you now enjoy the presence of Christ, and the power of his Spirit, you need not mind what happens to you.

*5, 6. But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*

They were cast down because he was going away from them. Love awoke fear. It was a hard thing for them to have to miss him; they could not tell what might happen to them when their Leader was gone from their midst. Do you wonder that they were filled with sorrow? Yet there was no real cause for grief; there was rather reason for rejoicing when they understood the true lesson of Christ’s departure. There is no real cause for your sorrow, dear friends. If you knew all things, you would rejoice exceedingly in that very thing that now most troubles you.

*7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

And the Comforter is better for us than the personal presence of Christ. We do not always think so; but it is true. It is better for the Church to have the Holy Spirit in the midst of her, than for Christ to be here in the bodily presence on the earth.

*8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

The world is not as yet convinced, but it is convicted; though it does not own its guilt, there is more than sufficient evidence to prove it guilty in the sight of God.

*9. Of sin, because they believe not on me;*

What must be the depth of human wickedness that sinners will not accept a Divine Saviour! This is the crowning, crushing proof of human guilt: "They believe not on me."

*10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;*

Christ was righteous, the righteous One, whom men rejected, for he has gone up to the Fathers side, where he could not have been if he had not perfected righteousness. The very going back of Christ to the Father's throne proves that righteousness does exist, and convicts men of sinning against it.

*11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

The gospel judges him, and dethrones him; and as there has been a judgment of the world's king, so there will be a judgment of the world itself.

*12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

Some teachers overload their hearers with truth till I might truly say that they pile on the agony. Truth which cannot be received is often most irksome and burdensome to the hearer; when the mind is not in a fit condition to bear any more instruction, it is cruel work to impose it. Our Lord Jesus did not so overburden his disciples: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

**13.** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself;*

This is a very wonderful expression: “He shall not speak of himself.” We have plenty of men, nowadays, who boast that they do speak of or from themselves; that is to say, they profess to borrow from no one, not even from God. They are original thinkers, inventors; they bring forth fresh things out of the depth of their wonderful minds; but even the Holy Ghost is here said not to “speak of himself.”

**13.** *But whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak;*

That is just our business, to hear God’s message, and then to speak it; and if the Holy Ghost does this, and if Jesus did it, we also may be glad to do the same. We are no inventors of great novelties; we are simply the message-bearers of the Most High, the declarers of the old truths which God has revealed to us.

**13-16.** *And he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.*

How wonderful this is! We are to see Jesus because he has gone to the Father. It looks as if that were a reason why we should not see him; but we see him better by faith, now that he has gone to the Father, than we could have seen him while he was here below covered with the veil of his humiliation. Yet it is hardly surprising that the disciples were puzzled by their Lord’s words: “A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me:” and, “Because I go to the Father.”

## **JOHN 16:1-20**

This chapter contains some of the most precious words that the Lord Jesus uttered before he died upon the cross.

**1.** *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*

Or, as the Revised Version translates it, “be made to stumble.” Christ would not have his children stumble. There is an offence of

the cross, but he would not have us needlessly offended. How careful is our dear Saviour not to give us offence! We ought to be very careful not to offend him; but what condescension it is on his part that he should be careful of offending us, or of permitting us to be offended, or made to stumble.

*2. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*

Can you remain faithful to your Master then, when you lose your position, or your character, or men put you out of the synagogue? When you nearly lose life itself, and when they shall think they are doing God's service by seeking to kill you, can you stand true to Christ then? The Master knew that days of bitter persecution would soon come upon his followers, so he strengthened them against those evil times that were approaching.

*3. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

It is ignorance that makes men hate God's people and his Son: "They have not known the Father, nor me." Truly did Paul say, "I did it ignorantly in unbelief;" and for such persecutors there is full and free forgiveness. When they turn unto the Lord, even this sin shall be forgiven them; but they will not forgive themselves for having committed it; and, like Paul, they will count themselves the chief of sinners because they persecuted the Church of God.

*4. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.*

"You will then see my foresight, my care for you, my prophetic power. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. You will not be taken by surprise." If any of you who have lately been converted should meet with great opposition, do not be surprised; Jesus has told you to expect it; and if the fire should get seven times hotter, count it no strange thing that the fiery trial has happened unto you. It has happened unto others before you, and will happen to others after you; therefore be prepared for it.

*4. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.*

"While I was with you, you could run to me, and tell me all about your trials and difficulties. If anybody was hard with you, I

could come to your help, and comfort you. You did not need to know these things before, so I did not tell you of them. You do need to know them now, and now I tell you of them.”

5. *But now I go my way to him that sent me;*

Christ was going to the cross, and to the grave, and afterwards to heaven.

5. *And none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?*

For want of asking that question, Christ’s disciples were full of grief.

Sometimes we do not ask enough questions. We ask too many questions of doubt; it would be well if we were to ask a few more questions of believing curiosity. There are some things that we ought to wish to know; and Christ encourages his people to come to him for information.

6. *But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*

When a poor Christian friend is dying, you are full of sorrow because he is going away from you. Why do you not ask whither he is going? If he is going home to heaven and to glory, why, then be comforted about him; you have no cause for distress on his account.

7. *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away.*

“It is better for you that I should be absent than that I should be present.” Their Lord was their joy, their Leader, their Teacher, their Comforter. He is going away, and he tells them that his absence will be a gain to them. “It is expedient for you that I go away.”

7. *For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him, unto you.*

Now, it is better for us to have the Comforter than to have Christ here in bodily presence; for if Christ were here tonight, in this Tabernacle, where could we put him so as to be equally near each one of us? I should certainly want him up here on the platform; and you, up there in the top gallery, would say, “Well, we are a long way off; why should he not come up here?” You see, if it is bodily presence that is enjoyed, some must be near, and some must be far off; but now that Christ has gone up to heaven, his Spirit is here. Where is that Spirit? On the platform, I hope, and everywhere else.

Any of you who desire it may have the Holy Spirit's presence. The Lord says, "I will put my Spirit within you." Better than the bodily presence of Christ is the real, though spiritual, presence of the Holy Ghost.

**8.** *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

What, a Comforter reprove? Yes. The Holy Spirit never comforts till he has reproved. There must be a reproof of sin before there can be comfort in Christ. And while the Spirit comforts saints, he reproves the world.

**9.** *Of sin, because they believe not on me;*

The greatest sin in all the world is, not believing on Jesus. Our Lord did not say, "Of sin, because of the evil of drunkenness." That is a great sin, a cursed sin, and there are other great sins; but Christ said, "Of sin, because they believe not on me." That is the root sin, the foundation sin, the sin that keeps a man in his sin.

**10.** *Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;*

It is God's righteousness that takes Christ up to heaven. He has been here; he has lived a perfect life; he has died a sacrificial death; and God has shown his acceptance of him, for he has gone to his reward.

**11.** *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

When Christ came here, there was a crisis, a judgment; and sin was judged and condemned; and the prince of the world, the chief sinner in the world, received his death-blow: "the prince of this world is judged."

**12.** *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

See how Christ teaches us slowly, wisely, prudently. There are some things which some of you young Christians do not know; you could not bear them if you did know them. You shall know them when you can bear them. A man with a doctrine that he cannot handle is often like a child with a tough piece of meat which he cannot bite. Give the child milk, or the crumb of the loaf. Do not put crusts into his mouth till he has teeth to bite them; do not give him

meat till he can digest it. See the gentle Saviour's way of imparting instruction. He teaches us much, but not too much at a time.

**13.** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

See, my dear brethren in the ministry, how little store the Holy Ghost sets by originality. We have men nowadays straining to be original. Strain the other way, for listen, "He shall not speak of himself," — not even the Holy Ghost, — "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak." He is the Repeater of the Father's message, not the inventor of his own. So let it be with us ministers. We are not to make up a gospel as we go along, as I have heard some say. We are not to shape it to the times in which we live, and suit it to the congregations to which we speak. God forbid! Let this be true of every one of us, "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak"

**14.** *He shall glorify me*

The Holy Ghost does that; therefore, surely we, who are the preachers of the gospel, should aim at the same object: "He shall glorify me." It should be our one desire to magnify and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ.

**14-16.** *For he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.*

That was a very simple statement, every Sunday-scholar understands it now; but the twelve apostles did not understand it when they heard it.

**17, 18.** *Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.*

They said this "among themselves." This was not a wise course, for what can ignorance learn of ignorance? Here were disciples questioning one another; none of them knew anything, and yet they

were trying to teach one another. If they had all gone to their Master, how much more quickly would they have understood his words! Take everything to Jesus. Try everything by the Word of God. Do not believe what you hear because I say it, or because somebody else says it. Go to the Word of God to learn what you need to know, and to the Spirit of God to teach you the meaning of what you read.

**19, 20.** *Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament,*

Christ would die; he would go away and be unseen. On the cross he would depart out of this life; in the tomb he would be hidden from his disciples: "Ye shall weep and lament."

**20.** *But the world shall rejoice:*

But not for long; the world's joy at Christ's death was soon over.

**20.** *And ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

I think we may leave off our reading at this verse, with these words to flavor our mouth all this week: "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." God grant that it may be so with many here present, for Christ's sake! Amen.

## **JOHN 16:1-22**

**1.** *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*

"That you should not be scandalized when you see me put to death, and when you miss my bodily presence from your midst. I want to prepare you for the shame and death that lie before me, and also to prepare you for all that lies before you, for many of you will have to drink of my cup, and to be baptized with my baptism. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended," or ashamed, or scandalized, or caused to stumble, when they come to pass."

**2.** *They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*

That terrible “time” did come very soon, and the Jewish and other persecutors hunted down the Christians in almost every place where they could be found. Nothing would satisfy their cruel foes but the blood of multitudes of martyrs, and many of the persecutors actually thought that they were doing God service while they were putting his children to torture and death.

**3, 4.** *And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.*

To be forewarned is to be forearmed, especially when the Lord Jesus Christ gives the forewarning; and his disciples were thus to be forearmed and braced up for the coming conflict.

**4.** *And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.*

“I needed not, at the beginning of my ministry, to trouble you about these things. Even then, you and I were hated by evil men, but I was with you, so I was able to protect you from them.” The persecutors could not slay Christ’s sheep, as they desired to do, as long as their Shepherd was still with them, so his warning words were not needed while he was in their midst. Christ does not teach us everything at once; if he did, we might be so confused that we should not learn anything. Perhaps we have sometimes wished that our ears could hear more than they now do; but it is most probable that, if we could hear more, we should really understand less than we now do. Have you, at any time, had your hearing more than usually acute? If so, you must then have heard a thousand sounds which it would have been better for you not to have heard; for they so confused and confounded one another that you did not hear anything distinctly. It is just so with the mind; it is capable of receiving a certain quantity of truth; but if too much truth be placed before it at once, it produces confusion in the mind’s ear and in the mind’s eye, and we really hear less, see less, and understand less than we should do if less truth were set before us. The Master knew that his disciples were like narrow-necked bottles, which must be gradually filled, so he only revealed the truth to them as they were able to receive it.

**5, 6.** *But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*

Sorrow sometimes prevents us from learning the lessons that Christ wishes to teach us. You remember that, in the garden of Gethsemane, Christ's disciples were "sleeping for sorrow," and so they lost some of the lessons that they might otherwise have learnt. Those who are in great trouble are often in that dazed condition in which half-awakened persons are; and there is a measure of sleepiness about us all in times of sorrow. It was so with the disciples on this occasion, and therefore they did not ask their Lord what they might have asked him if sorrow had not filled their hearts: "None of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?"

**7-9.** *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me;*

Which is the head of all sin, the root of all sin, the sin which lieth in front of the door of mercy, and blocks the sinner's way. Oh, that the Spirit of God would convince all here, who are not believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are living in the greatest of all sins "because they believe not on Christ"!

**10.** *Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;*

Of course, Christ would not have been received back by his Father if he had not completed the work of righteousness which his Father gave him the commission to perform. The risen and glorified Saviour is the great testimony to the righteousness both of Christ and of his gospel.

**11.** *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

Christ has already judged the prince of the powers of evil, so you may depend upon it that he will also judge all those who are under the dominion of the traitor prince who has usurped his Master's position and authority. Christ has summoned the dread lord of evil to his bar, and judged him. Think not, O ye who are his servants, that any of you will be able to elude the vigilance of the great Judge of all! Judgment will assuredly come to the common

soldiers of the prince of darkness since their captain himself has been judged and condemned.

**12.** *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

Here again observe the reticence of the Saviour for his disciples' good, still graciously keeping from them what they could not bear to hear; and are not you, beloved, thankful that you do not, at this moment, know what is to happen to you in the future? It is wise for each one of us to say, —

“My God, I would not wish to read  
My fate with curious eyes; —  
What gloomy lines are writ for me,  
Or what bright scenes arise.”

It is best for you, at present, to know but little. Prize what you do know, and be content to leave all that is not yet revealed, for “the secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever.”

**13.** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:*

All that you need to know, and may know, he will teach you. If you cannot find your way into the heart of any truth, the Spirit of God has the clue to it, so ask him to guide you into it. There is such a thing as seeing the outside of a truth; that is good as far as it goes, but the blessedness lies in getting to the inside of the truth, the very kernel and core of it.

**13, 14.** *For he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me:*

That is the distinctive mark of the Spirit of God. If any man says that he speaks by the Spirit, you can test him in this way, — does what he says glorify Christ? If not, away with him, for he is not speaking as the Holy Spirit speaks.

**14-18.** *For he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. Then said some of his disciples among themselves,*

*What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.*

These disciples of Christ were almost as ignorant as the rank outsiders were. Though they had been with Jesus for three years, they had not learnt what is clear enough to every Sunday-school child today, and what is certainly perfectly understood by all who are taught of God. They said, “What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.”

**19-22.** *Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*

### **JOHN 16:16-33**

Our Lord is speaking to his disciples before his departure from them to be crucified, and he says:

**16.** *A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.*

It is wonderful how he could talk thus calmly about his death, knowing that it would be a death of bitter shame and terrible agony. Yet he does, as it were, pass over that view of it as he says, “A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me,” — “because I die?” No. “Because I am crucified?” No; but, “because I go to the Father.” Beloved, always think of your departure out of the world in the same light: “I go to the Father.” Do

not say, "I die; I languish upon the bed of pain; I expire." No; but, "I go to the Father."

**17, 18.** *Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.*

Then why not ask him? But are not you and I often very slow to ask the meaning of the Master's words? You read in Scripture something that you cannot understand, and you say to yourself, "I cannot make out the meaning of that chapter;" but do you always pray over it, and ask the Writer to tell you what he intended when he wrote it? It is a grand thing to have this Inspired Book, and it is a grander thing still to have the Spirit of God, who inspired it, abiding with his people for ever; but we fail to learn many a secret from the Word because we do not pray our way into it. He who does not know can scarcely have his ignorance pitied when it remains willful; if you can know for the asking, why not ask?

**19.** *Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?*

They might have inquired a long while among themselves, and all in vain; but to go to their Lord was the short way out of the difficulty, for he could explain it. See how ready he is to explain, for he expounds the truth even to those who had not asked for an exposition. In this matter, he was found of them that sought him not. Knowing that they were desirous to ask, he accepted the will for the deed, the wish for the prayer; and he answered the secret longing of their heart.

**20.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice:*

"I am going away from you, and while I am gone, it will be all weeping and lamenting with you; but while I am gone, the world shall have its hour of triumph, it shall think that I am slain, and that my cause is defeated."

**20, 21.** *And ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.*

So, when Christ came back again, they would remember no more the sorrow of their travail hour in which they saw him bound, and spat upon, and taken off to execution, and mocked upon the tree. The joy that would come of it all would obliterate the remembrance of the sorrow.

**22, 23.** *And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing.*

“Ye shall not need to make anymore inquiries of me, for everything shall then be explained to you by the Spirit.”

**23.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.*

“This shall be one fruit; of my passion, that, henceforth, whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father, in my name, shall be given to you; and though you may not, perhaps, address your prayers to me personally, yet addressed to the Father, in my name, they shall succeed.”

**24.** *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name:*

“Ye have not yet learnt how to use my name in prayer.” Our Lord had not yet taught them so to pray; but now we know what it is to ask in the name of Christ, it is to pray with the authority of the risen and glorified Son of God.

**24.** *Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

See how our Lord continues to drive at that point, for he would have his people happy. He wants you, beloved, to be ‘joy-full’ — full of joy; not merely to have a little joy hidden away in a corner somewhere, but “that your joy may be full.”

**25, 26.** *These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:*

Though that is, indeed, what our Lord does.

**27.** *For the Father himself loveth you,-*

“The Father, whom you are so apt to think of as sterner than myself, and farther off than I, the Son of man am, ‘the Father himself loveth you,’”—

**27.** *Because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.*

Have you, dear friends, love to Christ? Do you believe that Christ came forth from God? Then does the Father give his special love to you.

**28.** *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

Had he not clearly explained what he meant by being absent a little while, and then coming back again?

**29, 30.** *His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure-*

Now they can give reasons for the hope that is in them. “Now are we sure”—

**30.** *That thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.*

They are very positive; but notice the check that our Lord put upon all this confident assurance.

**31, 32.** *Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone.*

Whenever there is any boasting upon your lips, even though you may think that you can rightly say, “Now we are sure,” stop a bit, dear friends, stop a bit. We have not any of us all the good we think we have; nay, they who think themselves perfect think the most amiss. They are altogether mistaken, and there is some latent unbelief even where faith is strongest. Christ still asks, “Do ye now believe?” You have only to be sufficiently tried, and to be tempted long enough, and in that very point where you think you are strongest you will fail. “Now are we sure,” say the confident disciples. “Ah!” says Christ, “do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone.”

**32.** *And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*

How gloriously is that blessed truth put in just here! The awful solitude that Christ was about to pass through can hardly be understood by us. It was not only that every friend forsook him, but that there was not under heaven a single person who could sympathize with him. He was going through deeps that no other could ever fathom, he was to bear griefs which no other could ever bear. Ye may indeed sip of his cup, but ye can never drink it to its dregs as he did. Ye may be baptized with his baptism; but into the depths of the abyss of woe into which he was immersed, ye cannot come. Alone! Alone! Never was there a human being so much alone as was the man Christ Jesus in that dread hour; and yet he says, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." O brave Master, make us also brave! May we be willing to stand alone for thy sake, and to feel that we are never so little alone as when we are alone with thee!

**33.** *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace.*

Your Lord wants you to have peace. Come, then, ye tried ones, ye who are tossed about with a thousand troublous thoughts, it is your Master's wish and will that ye should have peace.

**33.** *In the world ye shall have tribulation:*

You have found that true, have you not? Perhaps you are finding it true just now: "In the world ye shall have tribulation."

**33.** *But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

And in that overcoming he has conquered for you also, and he guarantees to you the victory in his name.

## **JOHN 16:16-33**

**16.** *A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.*

Remember that the disciples were on the verge of great trouble. Their Leader and Friend was about to be taken away from them by a cruel death. They were to be tried as they had never been tried before. The Saviour therefore prepared their minds for the trial. I have often noticed that, before a great trouble comes, the Spirit of God secretly comforts in a very remarkable manner those who are to be tried. Perhaps, tonight, without knowing it, we may be near some

great affliction or sorrow. If so, may the Lord store us with comfort and strength for the coming hour of need!

**17, 18.** *There said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shalt see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.*

It was only too plain. We often do not understand our Master because we imagine that there is some deep significance in his words when their meaning lies upon the very surface. If you would understand the gospel as you understand the common talk of life, it would be wise. If we could but bring men to believe God as a child believes its mother, practically and really, then their salvation would be a very simple and speedy matter.

**19, 20.** *Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice:*

Sometimes the world appears to have the best of it. Its mouth is full of laughter while the child of God cannot speak for sorrow. Ah! well, there is time enough for a change. We may very well let those laugh today who will have to gnash their teeth for ever. Judge not God by your present circumstances. Take the rough with the smooth. Be willing to go to heaven up the bleak side of the hill.

**20.** *And ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

So, the more of it the better. If your sorrow is to be turned into joy, then the more sorrow, the more joy. Happy is he who endureth trial, since his trial is to be turned into happiness.

**21, 22.** *A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow:*

But your sorrow is the pang of life.

**22.** *But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*

The joy that comes by sorrow in connection with Christ is the joy of which we shall never be bereaved. Let us thank God that there is a joy which no man can take away. Happy are they who have it.

**23.** *And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you,*

Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. This is a grand promise. If we dare ask in the name of Christ, and it is not everything that we could ask for in his name ! if our petition is such that we honestly judge that we may put Christ's name to it; if it is a thing that Christ would have asked; if it is a thing that Christ could have asked, let us ask in Christ's name, and the Father will give it.

**24.** *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name:*

You have not been bold enough. You have asked a few petty things, but you have never fully made use of Christ's name. How many Christians have never learned to pray in the name of Christ! They say at the end of their petition, "For Christ's sake." That is good as far as it goes. I may ask a man to give me such and such a thing for the sake of another; that is good pleading so far as it goes. But if I dare to use the authority that my friend gives me to put his name at the bottom of my request, that is another and a higher thing. To ask in the name of Christ, to plead under his authority, this is to pray indeed.

**24.** *Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

"That your joy may be full," a ripe joy, a joy that fills your being, that sparkles in your eye, dances in your feet, leaps in your heart, an unutterable, inexpressible joy: "That your joy may be full."

**25, 26.** *These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:*

Though that be true,

**27.** *For the Father himself loveth you,*

What a delightful little sentence! "The Father himself loveth you."

**27.** *Because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.*

God's first love to us is from himself alone. Then there is another love that grows in his heart because of our love to his Son. You love your child. The reason lies in your own heart. After a while, that dear, loving, affectionate child has won a farther place in your affection, and you love him because of his choice and special love to you. Remember that Psalm, "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name." Our love of God wins from him another love, of a different sort, although it comes from the same fountain as the first: "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."

**28-30.** *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.*

One does not see any reason why they should have been made so strong in faith just then. But we were not there to hear Christ's words. There is many a message, which depends upon the tone and manner of the speaker for its influence over the people who hear it. When you read the story afterwards, without the earnest manner and the living tone of the speaker, you do not see why it had such a strange effect upon his hearers. So we do not quite see here, by the calm reading of this narrative, why the disciples leaped all of a sudden into such confidence.

**31.** *Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?*

He did not feel so sure of their faith as they did. We often think we have great heaps of the gold of faith; and it glitters very brightly, but it is not the precious metal after all. So Jesus said, "Do ye now believe?"

**32.** *Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*

These poor creatures, who were so bold and so oversure, would all be runaways. If persecution were to arise in our day, I wonder how many of us would be found true men. Ah! you think you are true blue; but you would run at the first touch of water, not to

mention fire. Are there not many of us who are but poor believers? If our faith were sharply tried, would it stand the test?

**33.** *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

Christ wants his disciples to have peace. Are you fretting tonight? Are you afraid of Monday? Are you fearful about the trials of the week? Christ wants you to be at peace. Be quiet. Be quiet. Let all be still within your heart, and wait your Father's will. "In the world ye shall have tribulation:" on God's threshing-floor the flail will be kept going. If you are a child of God, you will have to suffer. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings; and good soldiers of Jesus Christ must expect to pass through the same experience. As long as you are here, you will be tried: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Think of that; the Christ who is about to sweat great drops of blood, and to die on the cross of Calvary, says, "I have overcome." It is not Julius Caesar's "Veni, vidi, vici;" but it is Christ's "Veni, vidi, vici;" ! "I came, I saw, I conquered:" "I have overcome." And as he has overcome, so shall you, if you be his true follower.

## **JOHN 17**

**1, 2.** *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Here the doctrines of a general and a particular redemption sweetly blend "As thou hast given him power over all flesh," they are all under Christ's mediatorial government by virtue of his matchless sacrifice; but the object in view is specially the gift of everlasting life to the chosen people: "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

**3.** *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

No man has life eternal, then, who is in ignorance of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ; but once to know God, and to know Christ, is

sure evidence that we possess a life that can never die: "This is life eternal."

**4-6.** *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

Is not that sweetly put on the part of our divine Lord? These chosen men had been poor creatures at the very best; very forgetful and very erring; yet their Lord brings no charges against them but he says to his Father, "They have kept thy word."

**7.** *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.*

"They have learnt to link the Father and the Son; they know that though I am the channel of all blessing, yet thou, O my Father, art the fountain from which it flows."

"Jesus, we bless thy Father's name  
Thy God and ours are both the same;  
What heavenly blessings from his throne  
Flow down to sinners through his Son!"

**8.** *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

He is looking at them in contrast with the world which utterly rejected him; in contrast with that world, the disciples had received and known Christ. Oh, what a blessed distinction does the grace of God make between men! We were all blind by nature; and now that we see, it is because the sacred finger of Christ hath touched our eyes, and opened them. Let him have all the glory of it; yet let us note how well he speaks of his people For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."

**9, 10.** *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.*

Oh, the blessed union of interests between Christ and the Father! How surely do we belong to the Father if we in very deed belong to Christ, and what a holy unity is thus established!

**11.** *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

Here is a prayer, then, for the preservation and the unity of the people of God; two very necessary petitions. Would God that they might be fulfilled in us, that we might be kept, and kept even to the end, and then kept in living union with all the people of God, and with the Father and with the Son!

**12, 13.** *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest 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 thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

In this wondrous prayer, note the special design of the words of Christ; not only that we might have joy, but that we might have Christ's joy, and not merely have a little of it, but might have it fulfilled in ourselves.

**14-16.** *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

Jesus puts twice over this most special and important fact, which we must never forget: "They are not of the world." Let us never live as if we were of the world; but where such a vivid distinction has been made, God grant that there may be an equal distinction in our lives! Now comes the prayer for sanctification.

**17, 18.** *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

Christ was the great Missionary, the Messiah, the Sent One; we are the minor missionaries, Sent out into the world to accomplish the Father's will and purpose.

**19, 20.** *And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

That shows that Christ's prayer embraces us also who have been brought to believe on him through the word which the apostles declared. Christ, with prescient eye, looked on every one of us who believe on him, and prayed for each one of us as much as he did for John, and Peter, and James.

**21, 22.** *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: Unity is the glory of the Church of Christ. It shall be the very crown of the Church of the living God; and when she puts it on, then will the wondering world acknowledge and accept her Lord.*

**23.** *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*

Wonderful words! How shall we dive into their depths? To think that the Father should have loved us even as he loved his only-begotten Son; oh, the heights and depths of this wondrous love!

**24, 25.** *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.*

You notice the division that there is here. There are two parties; there is the world, and there is the Church; what is it that divides them? Read these two clauses: "The world hath not known thee;" "These have known that thou hast sent me." What stands between? "But I have known thee." It is Christ himself, coming in between the two parties, like the cloudy-fiery pillar, black with darkness to the Egyptians, but bright with light to the Israelites. Oh, to have Christ between you and the world! It is the best form of separation: "I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me."

**26.** *And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it*

I read it to you as it stands. Our good translators were always afraid of using a word too often, for fear of falling into tautology; so for what they considered the beauty of the language they used the word “declared instead of I made known”; but why should they have done so? Who were they that they should have wanted to improve on Christ’s words? It should be the same word right on: “The world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have made known unto them thy name, and will make it known:”

*26. That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

Oh, that this love may be in us, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

## **JOHN 17**

This chapter contains the marvellous prayer of our Great High Priest. May the Holy Spirit apply its teaching to our hearts as we read it!

*1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

The great design of Christ, all through his life on earth, was to glorify the Father. He came to save his people, but that was not his first or his chief aim. It was his object, through the salvation of myriads of the sons of men, to glorify the Father.

*2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*

Here we have both the universality and the speciality of the work of divine mercy. Christ has power over all flesh, men are in the power of the one Mediator, but there is this special object ever before him: “that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

*3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

This does not mean mere head-knowledge; but to know in the heart and soul the one only true God, and Jesus Christ who was sent of him to the sons of men, “this is life eternal.” God without Christ brings not eternal life, and Christ, if he were not sent of God, would

not bring eternal life to us, but knowing God in Christ Jesus is eternal life.

**4.** *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

Here our Saviour speaks by anticipation. He foresaw that he would pass through his passion, that all the work of his people's redemption would be fully accomplished, and in this his final prayer on earth to the Father he could truly say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." May you and I be able to say the same when we depart out of this world! Not boastingly, — there was no boasting in our Lord, — but truthfully conscientiously, from the bottom of our heart may each one of us be able to say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"!

**5.** *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

After the finished work, Christ was to have the glory. O worker for God, seek not glory before thy work is done! Expect not honour among men because thou hast begun the work so earnestly; plod on until it is finished, then shall the glory come. "Verily I say unto you, they have their reward," said our Lord concerning the scribes and Pharisees who sought the praise of men; but you have not your reward at present, it is yet to come. Wait for it, for it is sure to come.

**6.** *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

How tenderly he speaks about them! He says the best he can of them; they were faulty, feeble folk, but he says, "They have kept thy word." So they did. Oh, that you and I may do the same, and not be swept away by the drift of the current of unbelief! If we are not perfect, if we fail in some respects, yet may the Master be able to say of us to God, "They have kept thy word"!

**7.** *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.*

How the blessed Christ loves to lay aside all honour to himself even in his own gospel! He said that the things which he had taught to his disciples were not his own, they were the Father's. The Father

always honours the Son, and the Son takes care always to honour the Father.

**8-10.** *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.*

Every true child of God glorifies Christ; and if you cannot say that you are glorifying Christ, you should question whether you really belong to him. If you are his, it is true of you, "I am glorified in them," —not only by them, but in them, — "their suffering with patience, in their labouring with diligence, in their faith, in their trustfulness in me, 'I am glorified in them.'"

**11.** *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world,*

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We also know that we, too, are in the world; we have good reason to feel it, and sometimes to mourn it.

**11.** *And I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

When God keeps us, he keeps us in unity, our divisions are not the result of his work. When we get away from his keeping, and get away from his Word, then we are sundered in heart from him and from one another; but by his keeping he keeps his children one.

**12.** *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

The Scripture was fulfilled in the preservation of his own, and also fulfilled in the destruction of the traitor. God's Word will be fulfilled anyhow. Oh, that it may be to us a savor of life unto life, that we may be kept by it, and not a savor of death unto death, as it was to Judas, who was blinded by the very light that shone upon him! That fierce light that beat about the King of kings fell on him, and it blinded him eternally. God save us from such an awful doom as that!

**13.** *And now come I to thee;*

I can only read you this wonderful chapter, but what must it have been to have heard it! I think I see the look on the Saviour's face as he says to his Father, "And now come I to thee." May something like that look be on your faces, my beloved, when your last moments come! Looking away from your dear ones whom you must leave as Jesus left his disciples, may you each one be able to say, "And now come I to thee"!

**13.** *And these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

While he drained the cup of sorrow to the dregs, and went forward to all the agonies of the cruel cross, he wanted his disciples to have his joy fulfilled in them, that they might be filled full with his joy.

**14.** *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

This does not look like trying to please the world, to adapt our method to the spirit of the age, to come as near to the world as ever we can, to dabble in its politics, and join in its schemes. This has to me a very different tone in it from all that.

**15.** *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, —*

Christ and his people did not go together out of the world all at once that would have been to leave the world in an utterly forlorn condition, without any help whatever, so he says to his Father, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world," —

**15-16.** *But that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

You cannot make Christ a worldling; do what you will with his character; twist it as you like, you must see that there is something unworldly, otherworldly, about him. So let it always be with his people.

**17.** *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

Thank God for that: "Thy word is truth." Not, "Thy word contains the truth with an admixture of error;" or, "Thy word has some truth in it;" no, but, "Thy word is truth." Not only is it true, but it is truth, the very essential truth.

**18, 19.** *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, —*

“I separate myself to this work, I dedicate, devote, consecrate myself wholly for their sakes,” —

**19-20.** *That they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, —*

This little handful of disciples who had been gathered to his name, —

**20.** *But for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

Thank God that he will bless our word as well as his own Word! When our word is based upon his Word, when we do but expound what Christ has given us to say, then men shall believe on him through our word.

**21-23.** *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

This is a wonderful expression. Does the Father love his people as he loves Christ? Then his love to them must be without beginning, without change, without measure, without end. Oh, it would ravish your heart, it would carry you away to the very heaven of heavens, if you could get the full meaning of this expression, “and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me”!

**24.** *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.*

This is Christ’s last will and testament: “Father, I will.” It is not merely his prayer, but he makes this as one clause in his will, that all whom the Father gave him should be with him to behold his glory. And it will be so, beloved. He will not lose one of his own. He will never drop from that dear pierced hand any portion of the eternal gift of his Father.

**25, 26.** *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

Here the doctrine becomes a matter of experience. May we never rest till we get the full experience of it, that the very love which God gives to Christ may be found in our hearts shed abroad by the Holy Ghost! Amen.

## **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.”

*1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

What a sight it must have been to see the Divine Intercessor in this his last great prayer before he poured out his soul unto 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 thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.”

*2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Notice the doctrine of this verse. Here is the mention both of a general and a particular relation to Christ. “Thou hast 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 object of redemption, observe how it applies particularly to the elect of God. The motive for the Father’s giving to Christ power over all flesh is this, “that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

*3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast 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 thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee 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 should 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 Ghost, and here we have the very words of him who was God and man in one person.

**6.** *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

How gracious it was on our Lord's part to say the best he could of his disciples! These twelve 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, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word."

**7, 8.** *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst 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 unto them the words which thou gavest 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 educed from vanity? But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever; it shall abide when even heaven and earth shall pass away. Hence our

Saviour lays great stress upon this fact, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest 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 unto them the words which thou gavest me."

**9.** *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*

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 thou hast given me; for they are thine."

**10-11.** *And all mine are thine, and thine 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 thee.*

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 thine own name those whom thou hast 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 piece." 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 rent 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 thy name: those that thou gavest 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 thee;*

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 thee.” Our Lord thinks nothing of the bloody way by which he was to go to the Father. What though the cross, and 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 thee.”

**13.** *And those things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

Have you ever obtained this blessing, brethren, — 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 thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

“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.”

**16-18.** *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast 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 amongst 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 to us!

**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 brethren, 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 thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest 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 of God 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 truth 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 thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have-known thee, and those have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast 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.

## JOHN 17

**1.** *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; —*

That tremendous hour which was the very hinge of history, — that hour in which he must suffer, and bleed, and die, to pay up the ransom price for his people: “Father, the hour is come;” —

**1.** *Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

In the endurance of the cross, there was a mutual glorification. It was the time of the Saviour's humiliation, and yet, in a certain sense, he was never so glorious as when he died upon the tree. Then, too, he glorified his Father, vindicating divine justice, and manifesting divine love.

*2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou, hast given him.*

Christ, by his death, had power given him over all flesh; — that is the universal aspect of it; but there was a special purpose hidden within it: “that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

*3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

Dost thou really know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, his Son? Hast thou been brought into such familiar acquaintance with God as to accept Jesus Christ as thy Saviour? Then, thou hast eternal life, and thou mayest rejoice that thou hast a life like that of God himself, which can never die.

*4. I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

What a blessed thing that our Saviour was able to say this just before his death! Oh, that you and I may be able to utter some humble echo of this speech when we come to the end of our lives! This is indeed a life worth living.

*5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

“Take me up from earth again, reclothe me with that glory which, for a while, I have laid aside,”

*6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

What high praise this was of Christ's disciples! “They have kept thy word.” Poor creatures that they were, they often turned aside from the right path, they were oftentimes very ignorant, and very willful, yet the Lord knew that their hearts were right towards him, and that they willed to learn, and desired to believe. So he saw in

them what was often hidden even from themselves, and he testified to his Father, "They have kept thy word."

**7, 8.** *How they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;*

Every preacher of the gospel should ask is it that this is true concerning himself. When we pass on to the people the words which God has given to us, we supply them with real spiritual food, and so we glorify God; but if we only give them our own words, we do but mock their hunger, and we dishonour God. Our blessed Master, though quite able to speak his own original thoughts, kept to the words of his Father; let us be careful to imitate his example.

**8, 9.** *And they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*

There was a specialty in Christ's prayer now that he was nearing the end of his earthly life. He concentrated his intercessions upon the chosen people for whom he was about to shed his blood.

**10, 11.** *And all mine are thine, and thine 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 thee.*

The disciples were going to be left alone, and Christ's tender heart made him lessen the pain of the separation by offering this great petition on their behalf: —

**11.** *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

This was as though he had said, "Thou hast given them to me, my Father, to become my bride; and now I am about to die, and to return to thee, I give back this bride of mine into thy charge. Take care of her, I pray thee, till I can come back again, and receive her unto myself." There is such holy unity between these Divine Persons of the Godhead that the Father first gives the elect to Christ, and then Christ commits the elect into the Father's keeping.

**12, 13.** *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest 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 thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

Are you dull and sad today? Does anything depress your spirits? It is not according to your Saviour's mind that you should be unhappy; it is his will and purpose that the joy should be fulfilled in you. Ask for a sip from his cup of joy at this moment, one drop of his joy will make the dullest to be bright, and the saddest to be glad.

**14.** *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. He was a stranger here, and his people are also strangers and foreigners.*

We are not so much to be unworldly as to be other-worldly. We belong to another world, to another kingdom, even the kingdom of heaven.

**15.** *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

“Keep them in the world to battle with the evil; make them the salt that prevents putrefaction, and let them not lose their savor, let them not be contaminated by the evil in the midst of which they dwell.”

**16, 17.** *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

It almost looks as though our Lord anticipated that question of Pilate, “What is truth?” Here is his answer: “thy word is truth.”

**18.** *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

Christ was the sent One, and every Christian is also sent. All believers should be missionaries, sent forth upon a mission to bless the sons of men.

**19, 20.** *And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

Christ knew that his Church would grow. He did not merely pray for the little handful of disciples who were with him there, but he prayed for all who, in after years, should believe on him.

**21.** *That they all may be one, —*

That is the great prayer of Christ. There are not two churches, but one Church. Christ is not the Head of two bodies, he hath but one mystical body. There is but one Bridegroom, and there is but one bride, — that bride is his indivisible Church. Hence his prayer, “That they all may be one;” —

**21.** *As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

Can the world believe in Christ till his Church becomes more manifestly one? I fear not, so let us each one aim at the true unity of the one Church of Jesus Christ. There are come who aim at this by separating themselves from everybody else, but I do not see how they promote unity in that way, I clearly and painfully see how they increase divisions and multiply strife wherever they go. But let us, beloved, to the utmost of our power, promote the unity of the body of Christ.

**22, 23.** *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, —*

Do you understand this wonderful union? Jesus Christ in you: “I in them,” and then the Father in Christ: “and thou in me,” —

**23.** *That they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me,*

This is a wonderful truth, — that the Father loves the Church even as he loves Jesus Christ his Son. When shall the world ever know this till the unity of the Church is more clearly seen?

**24-26.** *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

Oh, for a blessed fulfillment of that prayer in our experience this very moment, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

## JOHN 17

Can there be found, in all the records of mankind, in all the documents that have ever been preserved, anything that can match this record of our Saviour's great intercessory prayer? He seems to pray here as if he stood already within the veil; not pleading in agony as he did in the garden of Gethsemane, but speaking with that authority with which he is clothed now that his work on earth is done. There is as much of the divine as of the human in this prayer, and it is remarkable that in it our Lord does not make any confession of sin on account of his people. He does not come before God here, as it were in form a pauper is, with many pleas, but the burden of his prayer is that he may be glorified, and that his Father may be glorified in him. The words of the prayer are amongst the most simple that could have been selected, but oh, the depths that lie hidden beneath them! I do not think that, this side of heaven, any of us can know to the full the meaning of this wondrous chapter. May the Holy Spirit graciously grant us a glimpse of the glorious truths that are here revealed!

*1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven,-*

Not his hands, as we do who are poor suppliants; but his eyes, indicating whither his thoughts went. He "lifted up his eyes to heaven,"-

*1. And said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.*

No mere man would have dared to pray such a prayer as this. Jesus asks that he may be gloried by his Father that he also may glorify his Father, he put the two things together: "Father, glorify thy Son that thy Son may also glorify thee." This is not a plea that is fit for merely human lips. It is Jesus the Son of God who, in receiving glory from his Father, is also able to return it to his Father.

*2, 3. As thou has given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou has given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

See how he puts himself side by side with God as no mere man might dare to do. Only he who was equal with the Father could venture to plead thus, claiming power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him. Here we

learn that it is eternal life to know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

*4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

“My teaching is all done, my ministry is finished; and though there are still some arrears of suffering, yet those shall be fully discharged in due time. ‘I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.’”

*5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

You must try and think of who it is that is thus pleading, for so you will get at least some faint idea of the intercession of our great High Priest in heaven, for after this fashion he still prays to his Father before the eternal throne.

*6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

“They were thine, my Father, under thy direct government, but thou hast transferred them to my mediatorial sovereignty, and thou hast given them up to be mine, in a very special sense, beyond all the rest of mankind and this is one of their distinguishing characteristics, that they have kept thy word.”

**7, 8.** Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them. Is it so with you, dear friend? Have you received Christ’s words the very words which the Father gave to him, and which he has in his turn given to you? O soul, thou art indeed happy if this is the case with thee!” I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them,” —

*9. And have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world,” —*

That is, not in the same special sense as he prays for his people, not with that personal pleading which he offers on behalf of his own chosen ones: “I pray not for the world,” —

*9. But for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine*

In the 6<sup>th</sup> verse, Jesus had said to his Father, “Thine they were;” and here, in this 9<sup>th</sup> verse, he says, “They are thine.” They still belonged to the Father, the transference of them mediatorially to the Son having made no change in the Father’s relation to them.

**10.** *And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.*

I can understand a man saying to God, “All mine are thine;” but no man, unless he is something more than man, dares to say to God, “Thine are mine.” But Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, gives all that he has to God, and all that God has belongs to him, so that he can truly say, “All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.”

**11.** *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

It has been well said that this expression, “My Father,” is a binding up of the Old and New Testaments in one. The Old Testament reveals the holiness of God, but it is the New Testament that is peculiarly the revelation of God as the Father. We put the two together, as Jesus does, and thus he speaks, “Holy Father, make my people one, and keep them one.” Let us close up our ranks, brethren. Let us love each other more; and as Christ has prayed that we may be one, let us constantly seek to manifest our oneness among the sons of men,

**12-17.** *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest 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 thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth:*

How wondrously our Saviour’s prayer advances! He asks for his people’s unity; he asks for their joy, he asks for their preservation, and now he asks for their purification, their sanctification: “Sanctify them through thy truth:”

**17-20.** *Thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone,*

“For these who are already converted, I pray also for those who are not yet called by grace.”

**20-22.** *But for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: —*

Who amongst us knoweth the full meaning of that wondrous declaration?

“The glory which thou gavest me I have given them:” —

**22,23.** *That they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, and thou hast loved me.*

What a glorious assurance is that! It amazes us to know that the Father has loved us even as he loved his Son.

**24-26.** *Father, I will that they also, whom thou had given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.*

## **JOHN 17**

**1.** *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

Jesus is going forth to die, and he knows it; yet he prays to his Father, “Glorify thy Son.” There was no way of his coming to that glory except by passing through tears, and blood, and agony, and death. He only asks that he may be glorified in what he is about to

do, and to suffer, and he is ready for it all: “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.”

*2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

In that saying of our Lord we have an explanation of what he did by his redemption. There was a universal aspect of it: “Thou hast given him power over all flesh.” There was a special design in it: “That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” Sometimes, two views of the same thing may appear to contradict each other; but when we are taught of God, we soon discover that they do not really do so, and that a grand truth may be contained in the two descriptions of it. Christ had, by virtue of his death, power over all flesh; but it was for a distinct purpose: “that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

*3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

By this, then, dear friends, we can know whether we have eternal life or not. Do we know the Father? Do we know Jesus Christ as the Messiah the Sent One? Are we resting in that blessed knowledge? If so, he has given to us eternal life.

*4, 5. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

In deep humility, Jesus had laid that glory aside for a while. He had tabernacled in human flesh; and when he spoke these words, the time was approaching when, All his world and warfare done, he should go back to his pristine glory with something more added to it.

*6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world:*

They had not all of them clearly seen that manifestation. Jesus had to ask the question, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?” Still, that was not the fault of the manifestation; Christ had manifested the name — that is, the character — of God unto those who had been given to him out of the world.

**6.** *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

We might have expected that the verse would end, “and I have kept them.” But their keeping God’s Word is the evidence that Christ has kept them. Whenever a soul loves the Word of God, delights in the teaching of Christ, glories in those things which the world called dogmas,— as if they were so much dog’s meat,— when you and I can feed upon these things,— when every utterance of Christ is dear and precious to us,— that is good evidence of our being called out of the world, and separated unto Christ; it is one of the marks of divine grace which Jesus works in those whom the Father has given him: “Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy Word.”

**7.** *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.*

The Father gives Christ the truth which Christ gives to us. The Father gives Christ the souls which Jesus keeps until the day of his power. There is mutual communion between God the Father and his blessed Son; let us never say a word that might look as if we did not understand the oneness the everlasting and infinite oneness — which there is between the sacred persons of the Divine Unity.

**8.** *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;*

You know how men talk against “verbal inspiration.” Yet Christ says, “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.” Many are trifling with the teaching of God’s Word, as if it were of no importance at all. Not so did Christ: “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.”

**8.** *And they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou, didst send me.*

Firmly do we believe this, and in our heart of hearts we do accept every part of the teaching of Christ, no matter what it is. I hear people say, sometimes, “Oh, but that is not essential!” There is a great deal of mischief hatched out of that egg. O friends, it is essential that Christ’s disciples should treasure whatever he has said! Never trifle with that part of the Word of God which seems to be less essential to salvation than another portion; for if it is not essential to salvation, it may be essential to your comfort, or your holiness, or your strength, or your usefulness; and if it be essential

to God's glory, let us never trample it in the mire, or in any way dishonour it. Who am I that I should say, "This which God has spoken is important, but that other is not"? It does not do for us to presume to judge the Word of God; we should rather let the Word of God judge us.

**9.** *I pray for them: —*

Blessed word! Christ prays for his own people: "I pray for them:"

**9.** *I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me,*

In that last hour, just before his Passion, his thoughts were separating the precious from the vile; and his prayer ascended for his own people: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me;

**9, 10.** *for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them*

It is a wonderful thing that Christ should be glorified in his people. Can it be that he shall be glorified in me? Dear child of God, you sometimes sit in the corner, and think to yourself, "How insignificant I am! The church on earth would not miss me if I were taken away; and the choirs of heaven cannot need me." Oh, but your Lord is glorified in you! If you are one of his chosen and redeemed people, in your very weakness and need he finds opportunity to glorify his strength and his fullness. He knows the truth about this matter, and he says, "I am glorified in them."

**11.** *And now I am no more in the world,—*

He was going away; he has gone now.

**11.** *But these are in the world,—*

We know we are; do we not, brethren? We have a thousand things some of them very painful and humiliating to us,— to remind us that we are still in the world.

**11.** *And I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

Oh, what blessed keeping is that; to be kept in spiritual oneness! I do not expect to see the people of God in visible oneness; but as there was a secret, invisible union, most real and most true, between the Father and the Son, so there is, at this time, a secret union in the hearts of all believers, most deep, most real, most true. I may never

have seen that good friend before; but as soon as ever we begin to talk of Jesus and his love, if we are the living children of the living God, the bond of unity is felt at once by both of us. "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."

**12.** *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

What a blessed Shepherd is this who never lost a sheep! Judas crept in among the flock, but he never was truly one of the flock. He was never a son of God, he was "the son of perdition" all along. Christ has kept all his sheep, and all his lambs; and he will do the same, dear friends, even to the end.

**13.** *And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

What an unselfish Saviour! His heart is ready to break with his impending sufferings, and yet he prays for us, that we may be filled with his joy. I suppose that it is true that the Man of sorrows was the happiest man who ever lived. "For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame;" and, notwithstanding his boundless and bottomless grief, yet there was within him such communion with God, and love to men, and the certainty of his ultimate triumph, that kept him still joyous above the seas of tribulation. He prays that that same joy may be fulfilled in us; may God graciously grant it to all of us who believe in Jesus!

**14, 15.** *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.*

There is a reason for God's elect being allowed to remain in the world. They are never left, like wheat in the field, to perish through the damp and cold, or to be devoured by the birds of the air. Oh, no! We are left for God's glory, that men may see what the grace of God can do in poor frail bodies; for the service of Christ's Church, that we may be here for a while to carry on the cause of God, to be the means of comforting the little ones, and to seek the conversion of sinners. We are to be like salt to prevent putrefaction. We are God's preventive men, to prevent as much of the evil as we can; and we

are to fight with the evil that cannot be prevented, and to seek to overthrow it in Christ's name.

**16.** *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

Many, nowadays, say that we ought to blend the church with the community, and that it is a great pity to have any division between them. A great many good people are outside the church; therefore try to make the church as much like the world as ever you can! That is a silly trick of the devil which the wise servants of God will answer by saying, "To whom we give place by subjection, no, not for an hour." There must ever be a broad line of demarcation between the Church of Christ and the world, and it will be an evil day when that line is abolished. The sons of God took to themselves wives of the daughters of men, but that kind of union brought mischief with it, and it will ever do so.

**17.** *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

We cannot afford to give up God's inspired Word, because it is a means of our sanctification; and if this be taken away, it is not such-and-such a dogma, as they call it, put into the background, but it is truth that would sanctify us which is discarded, it is God's own Word that is flung to the dogs; and that must never be.

**18, 19.** *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. "I set myself apart unto holiness, that they also might be set apart unto holy uses through the truth."

**20.** *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

Our Lord knew that the little circle around him would grow into a multitude that no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues; so he prayed for all whom his Father had given him,

**21, 22.** *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:*

The Church will never know her true glory till she knows her perfect oneness; the One Church will be the glorious Church.

**23.** *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

That is a grand expression: “Thou has; loved them, as thou hast loved me.” What ! with the same love? It is even so; — a love without beginning, a love without change, a love without bounds, a love without end: “Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.”

**24-26.** *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

This blessed prayer was heard by the Father; all of it must be fulfilled, and untold blessings do and shall come to us through this intercession of our Lord, blessed be his holy name!

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 17.; AND 18:1-9.

## **JOHN 17**

**1.** *These words spake Jesus, and lifted Up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son; that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

Christ’s great intercessory prayer begins with his appeal to his Father to glorify his Son. Christ knew all that he would have to suffer during that “hour” to which he had looked forward from eternity, but his eye could see, beyond the cross with all its shame, the crown with all its glory. The Son being glorified, he would also glorify his Father, and there is a wondrous glory that comes to the Father through the death of his Son upon the cross.

**2.** *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Some people seem unable to see that there is perfect harmony between the general and the particular aspects of Christ’s atonement. As the one Mediator between God and men, he has absolute power over all men, to do with them as he wills, yet that power has a special relation to those whom his Father gave him

before the foundation of the world, and they are those who come to him in accordance with his declaration, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

**3.** *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

So that the only way to obtain eternal life is to know God the Father and God the Son, and the best way to know them is to ask God the Holy Spirit to teach us what is revealed concerning them in the Sacred Scriptures which he inspired holy men of old to write.

**4, 5.** *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which had with thee before the world was.*

As Christ had carried out his Father’s will, and done the work he had been sent to do, he was but right that he should go back to the glory which he had for a season voluntarily laid aside. You notice that, although he had not then died upon the cross, he was certain that he would there complete his great mediatorial work that he spoke of it as being already “finished.”

**6.** *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

No one but Christ could or would have borne such a testimony concerning his fickle, feeble followers, happy will it be for us if he can say also concerning us who profess to be his disciples, “They have kept thy word.”

**7, 8.** *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

You see how the truth reached these disciples. The Father gave the words to his Son in his mediatorial capacity, and he gave those words to his disciples, and they received them, and believed that Christ was indeed the Sent One from the Father.

**9, 10.** *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.*

See what perfect union there is between the Father and the Son, and note their mutual relationship to the chosen people, "They are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine."

**11, 12.** *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of Perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

So it is clear that Judas was not amongst those who were given to Christ by his Father; if he had been, he also would have been "kept."

**13.** *And now come I to thee;*

Christ looked beyond all that was to happen to him before he could return to his glory, and as he saw his Father waiting to welcome him, he cried "And now come I to thee." These might be appropriate words in the mouth of a dying believer: "And now come I to thee."

**13, 14.** *And these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

Never did anyone more thoroughly mix with men than Christ did, and never had anyone greater sympathy with human beings than he had, yet everyone knows that he never was "of the world." He was distinct from all who were round about him, and he says that his disciples were as he was: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" "Christ's people have a life that others have not; they have a relationship to God that others have not, they are swayed by motives which others understand not; and they are journeying onward toward a perfection to which others do not even desire to attain. So they are not of the world, and the world treats them as speckled birds, and hates them even as it hated their Lord and Master.

**10.** *I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil.*

Christ did not pray that there might be monasteries and nunneries where his servants might be shut away from the world, nor even that his followers might die in early youth, and go home to heaven; but he prayed that, remaining in the world for gracious purposes, —to be its salt and its light—, they might themselves be kept from the evil that is in the world. It would be a dreadful thing indeed if the chosen people of God were to be overcome by the world; so Christ prayed that his Father would keep them from the evil, for he well knew that they could not be kept from it by any power that was not divine. There is no less power needed for the preservation of a believer than for his regeneration. The sustentation of a Saint is a constant miracle, which can only be wrought by God himself.

**16, 17.** *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

Some men tell us that the truth is in the Word, but that the Word is not the truth. I read, the other day, that we might regard the Bible as a casket which contained the jewel of the truth, but was not itself the jewel. Christ did not talk in that fashion, for he said to his Father, “Thy word is truth.” This shows that God’s Word is not merely the casket of truth, but is the truth itself.

**18.** *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

They are sent ones, even as Christ was the Sent One. As he is the Christ, they are Christians, anointed with the same anointing as he himself is, and they should endeavor to be in all respects missionaries to the world, even as Christ was God’s great Missionary to the lost.

**19.** *And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

“I set myself apart wholly for them, that they also may be set apart for holy uses.”

**20.** *Neither pray I for these alone,-“*

For these who are already saved by my word,” —

**20.** *But for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

And so his blessed arm encircled not only the converts gathered to him by his own personal ministry, but also those who should, in after days, be converted under his servants' ministry; and it always seems to me to have been great condescension on his part to have said, "I pray for them also which shall believe on me through their word." We should have expected that he would have said, "through my word;" and, indeed, it is his Word that leads sinners to repent and to believe; yet Christ puts this honour upon those who speak his Word out of the fullness of their hearts. They have by experience made it their own, so he calls it theirs, and gives them this honourable position as the messengers of the gospel of salvation.

**21.** *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

I wish that we could see more of this blessed unity, yet it does exist, even if we cannot see it. Wherever there is any true spiritual life, —it matters not how much it may be marred by denominational divisions, —there is and there always must be, an essential unity. All Christians are one family in Christ. I do not mean all who call themselves Christians, but all who really are believers in Christ. The inner life is one, the source of that life is one, the nourishment of that life is one, and the end of that life is one, so that all who possess it must be one, —one in Christ, and one with one another, even as Christ is one with the Father.

**22, 23.** *And the glory which thou givest me I have given them; that they maybe one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; —*

That is the real secret of the saints' unity: "I in them," together with the everlasting union of Christ Jesus with the Father: "and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;" —

**23.** *And that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me*

This is a great deep, the words are very simple and clear, but their meaning is unfathomable. Is it really true that the Father has loved his chosen ones as he has loved his only-begotten Son? It is such a wondrous thing that one might be willing to lie awake at night to meditate upon the amazing truth here revealed in our

Saviour's words: "Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

**24.** *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

Some foolish folk talk about the saints being put away for a while into some purgatorial "limbo" in order that they may be made ready for heaven but Christ speaks not so, he says, "I will that they be with me where I am." We care not to answer curious questions about the disembodied state, it is enough for us that Christ knows all, and that we shall be with him for ever.

What shall be the occupation of those who are with Christ? "That they may behold my glory." There will be something worth looking at, something to be delighted with for ever and ever: "the glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." So God must have loved his people before the foundation of the world, for he hast loved them as he has loved his Son. There was no beginning and there shall be no end to the Father's love to his people; he says to each one of them, "I have loved thee, with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Here are waters to swim in, plunge into them, and revel in the bliss they are meant to convey to all who are in Christ Jesus.

**25-26.** *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

How rich is this language! How musical! Surely, never did any human poem match this peerless prose of the Divine Teacher. And now, what a descent it is as we pass on to the next scene in his life!

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 17, AND 18:1-9.

## **JOHN 17**

**1, 2.** *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also*

*may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Here we have the two doctrines of a general and a particular redemption. Through his death, Christ has power given him over all flesh, but the distinct, especial object is the salvation of his own — “that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

**3.** *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

To know God in the sense of being acquainted with him — loving him — abiding in fellowship with him — this is life eternal. To know God in Christ Jesus is to be saved indeed.

**4.** *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

Which no other man could ever have said — not even Adam in his perfection, for his work was not finished; and, alas! how marred it was before it came near to finishing! And the most gracious man that ever died could not, in his last moments, say, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,” for it was still imperfect. There were many things which he would wish to have done, and many error which he would wish to have rectified; but our Lord is more than man, and rises to this point — “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

**5.** *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

“I have disrobed myself to be thy servant. Clothe me again with the garments of my majesty. Let me come back to the palace when I shall have passed through the stream of death.” So far is the prayer for himself. Now he prays for his people.

**6, 7.** *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.*

“They have not accepted me as a human teacher on my own account, unsent and uncommissioned, but they perfectly understand that there is a union between the Father and the Son. The things that thou hast given me are of thee.”

**8.** *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

There are great depths in these words. One of the greatest of German divines always refused to preach from this chapter, for he said he felt that few of God's people had a sufficient measure of faith to understand it; and when he came to die, he had this read to him three times before he fell asleep. There is a world of wonderful mystery. Though the words are short and plain, yet the sense is fathomless.

**9.** *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou has given me; for they are thine.*

There is an intercession of Christ which is for all the world, but his choicest intercession — his effectual prayer — is for his own. Nothing, perhaps, makes men so angry as this statement. They cannot endure that God should dispense his gifts according to his own will; but so it standeth true. There is an intercession in which none have a part but his own. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine."

**10, 11.** *And all mine are thine, and thine 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 thee.*

They will be left therefore. The shepherd will be gone. They will seem to be like orphans with their best friend departed.

**11-13.** *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with therein the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest 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 thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

He asks not only that they may be kept and so unharmed, but that they may be comforted, and so made glad. O sad hearts, hear your Redeemer's prayer for you — and do not doubt that it is answered — "that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves."

**14.** *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

If nobody hates you for being a Christian, are you a Christian at all? If you find that you run with the general herd, and swim with the current, can you be a follower of that Christ who was despised and rejected of men?

**15.** *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

Not that they should shut themselves up in monasteries and convents. That is not the prayer of Christ. “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”

**16-19.** *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes, I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

Sanctify myself — consecrate myself — set myself apart — for their salvation that they also might be sanctified, consecrated, set apart through the truth. Now comes a third part of the prayer, in which he pleads for the whole church — for that part of it at that time not saved — for the unborn ones — for us.

**20-21.** *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

Our Saviour knew how apt we should be to split up into sects, and to be divided into parties, and so he prays again and again that we may be one. Cultivate the spirit of Christian affection. If there be divisions, let them not come through you. Contend earnestly for the faith, but also let us love one another.

**22, 23.** *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

Surely the passage seems to culminate here. These words rise like the peak of a mighty Alp almost out of our sight into the clear brightness of heaven — “hast loved them as thou has loved me.” Now, believer, thou canst not fully comprehend this, but believe it

— that as surely as the Father loves the Son, as and after the same manner also he loves you — without beginning, without measure, without change, without end “Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.”

**24-26.** *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved we may be in them,*

Let us read that wonderful passage again — “that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them.”

**26.** *And I in them.*

Sacred, mystical union! May our souls enjoy it day by day.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 32; JOHN 17.

## JOHN 17

**1.** *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, thee hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

The hour has come. The most important, the darkest, the most dreadful hour of Christ’s life was come. But he had only one thought in his mind. “Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.” Beloved, when our hour comes — and we shall have hours of darkness — may we have nothing on our mind but that, — that God would help us to glorify his name. We shall not dread suffering if that be our one desire, because we shall see that suffering often gives opportunities to God for manifesting his own glory in the patience of his people.

**2.** *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

I think this verse is a solution of the problem about general redemption and particular redemption. Christ, by his death, has obtained power over all flesh. There is a universality about his redemption, but the object of it still was that he should give eternal life to “as many as thou hast given me.” There is a specialty and

peculiarity about the grand ultimate result and design of the death of our Lord. Let us believe both truths.

**3.** *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

Is the knowledge of God life? Is the knowledge of Jesus Christ life? It is even so. But what a blessed form of knowledge this is! It is taught to us by the Spirit of God in a special and remarkable way. This is life eternal.

**4-6.** *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou invest me to do And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world:*

The best the clearest manifestation of the name or character of God is to be found in the person, the life, the work, the love of Jesus Christ. Well did he say in another place, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world."

**6.** *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

It has been their treasure. They have preserved it as a priceless blessing. They would never let it go.

**7, 8.** *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou invest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

Now that description of the people of God in Christ's day is true of us today. We have received the words which the Father has given the Son, and we believe of a surety that the Father has sent Jesus Christ into the world.

**9.** *I pray for them:*

Oh! how emphatically true this is! Christ always prays for them — for them, one by one — with most effectual prevalence. It is because- he prays that any of us are preserved. "I pray for them."

**9.** *I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me:*

There is a speciality in intercession, as well as in redemption. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me."

**9-11.** *For they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine 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 thee.*

And now they are left. Their great guardian and protector has gone. They have no visible Head left. "I am no more in the world, but these are in the world." You and I know that we are in the world. The world makes us know that. We are in an enemy's country. We are in a land which is not our rest; and however happy our portion may be an Christ the world takes care that we should understand that we are aliens and foreigners in it; hurrying through it towards our abiding home.

**11.** *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me that they may be one as we are.*

Do all that you can, beloved, to promote the unity of the people of God, not only on the larger scale, wherein all churches snail be brought together in loving accord, but also on the smaller scale among your own friends, and those Christian brethren who are in your own church. Let none of us break the concord. Oh! may we always be of a gentle, generous, Christlike spirit, that we may be one, as the Father is one with the Son.

**12.** *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

It is, perhaps, more wonderful that there were not more like Judas than that there should have been one like him. I wonder whether we can hope that in our churches there would be found as few as one in twelve who are not in heart with Christ. It is very wonderful that the rest should have been kept, and that this son of perdition should have been left to perish.

**13-15.** *And now come I to thee: and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world, I pray not that*

*thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

Either by death, or by shutting them up in monasteries, or causing them to dwell in caverns alone. “I do not pray for that.” Do not take them out of the battle, but save them from the deadly arrow.

Help them to play the man, and win the victory, and not desert the colors.

**16-18.** *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

Do you recognize your mission, dear friends? Do we all catch it? — that, as truly as Christ was the messenger of the Father, so every believer is the messenger of Christ. You are sent into this world to do an errand, not for yourselves, but for your Master. Are you doing it?

**19.** *And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

Christ sets himself apart for us, that they may set us apart for him. Have you realized this, my brother — that you are dedicated to Christ — that every breath you breathe, and thought you think, and word you speak, and act you do, should all be done as unto him? He lived alone for you.

Live alone for him.

**20.** *Neither pray I for these alone.*

These saved ones.

**20-22.** *But for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one;*

Christ prays for us before we believe, and we believe in answer to his prayer. Oh! what glorious words. The very glory which the Father gave to the Only-begotten has that Only-begotten handed over to his people. “that they may be one, even as we are one.”

**23.** *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

Now drink that in — all the sweetness of it — that the Father has loved his people even as he loved his Only-begotten.

**24.** *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for then lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

He will not be in glory, and leave me behind him. He is a bridegroom that cannot be satisfied unless his bride be a partaker of all his joy. He is so one with us, that as the head can never be content to be crowned, and the rest of the body be disgraced, so neither could Christ. We must be, if he wills it, where he is. We must behold his glory; we must share it.

**25.** *O righteous Father, the world hath not know thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.*

It is delightful to hear Jesus praying in this way for us, side by side with himself, though we are unworthy of so unspeakable an honour; praying for us as if his own self, his own glory, depended upon our safety. If Christ prayed thus for us, how ought we to pray for one another!

**26.** *And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it:*

As long as the Christ lived, he showed forth his Father's glory, and so should we. If we have declared it, we should say, "And will declare it." "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Thus the glorious union stands. May we always rejoice in it.

**26.** *That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

## **JOHN 17**

**1.** *These words spake Jesus, and, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come;*

The hour to which he had so long looked forward, the hour which he had anticipated with ardent desire: "The hour is come." On the very night that Jesus prayed this prayer, Luke's record tells us, "When the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them,

With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer;” So he began his great intercessory prayer, “Father, the hour is come, —

**1,2.** *Glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

In these words we have both the general and the special aspects of redemption. Christ has received power over all flesh, but with this peculiar design, that he should give eternal life to as many as his Father has given him. Who are they who have been given to him by his Father? All who come to him by faith, even as he said, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” To all of these Jesus gives eternal life.

**3.** *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

Do you know God? Do you know Jesus Christ? Are you on speaking terms, on loving terms, with them? Are they your friends? Then, you have eternal life; for “this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

**4-6.** *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

What a sweet thing for the Lord Jesus to say of that poor, much-erring company of disciples, “They have kept thy word”! “They have not been all they might have been, nor all they ought to have been, but, O my Father, they have kept thy word!” I trust that we may be found faithful to the truth that the Holy Spirit has taught us, and obedient to its precepts, that our Lord may be able to say to his Father concerning us also, “They have kept thy word.”

**7, 8.** *Now they have known that all things to whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known*

*surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

See how the Lord Jesus himself takes all his teaching from the Father. You never hear from him any boast about being the originator of profound thoughts. No, he just repeated to his disciples the words he had received from the Father: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." If Jesus acted thus, how much more must the messengers of God receive the word from the Lord's mouth, and speak it as they receive it!

**9, 10.** *I pray for them: I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them.*

Is not this a wonderful prayer? If anybody, possessing the greatest possible inventive faculty, were asked to produce a prayer which could be fitly prayed by a person who was both God and man, it would be an impossible task. This chapter has about it all the air of truthfulness, it ought to be sufficient to convince any man that Christ was God and man. There is such a wonderful mixing of the two natures, without any confusion of ideas, so manifestly does he plead as man, and yet so clearly does he also pray as none but the Son of God could pray, that he must be the God-man, the one mediator between God and man.

**11, 12.** *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

It was known and foretold that Judas would be lost; therefore, the Saviour, the great Keeper of the sheep, is not to be held responsible for the loss of "the son of perdition", who was never committed to his charge.

**13-17.** *And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest*

*keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

Our Divine Lord seems to think nothing about his own sufferings; all his thoughts are occupied with that which concerns his people. All his prayers are for them, that they may be made holy, and that so God may be glorified in them.

**18-19.** *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself,*

Or, "I set myself apart."

**19, 20.** *That they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

They were only a handful of disciples, but you cannot tell what a multitude will believe on Christ through their word. There were but twelve apostles; yet John beheld a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel, and after that he beheld a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands. The Saviour doubtless linked his little band of disciples with the ancient promise, "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains, the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." What great events from little causes spring! Whenever you are doing good, remember not only those who are immediately saved, but the others who will be blessed through them, even as our Saviour said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." We who have believed on Jesus, through the word preached or written by the apostles, are also included in this prayer of their Lord and ours. Notice what our Saviour asked of his Father for them and for us: —

**21.** *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

And when Christians, being one in Christ, and one in the truth, shall become more manifestly one in heart, and life, and faith, what glad days we may hope to see!

**22, 23.** *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and them in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

This is a wonderful expression, where will you find anything like it! It is indeed marvellous that God should have loved his people even as he loved Christ his Son, yet that is what the Lord Jesus here says: "Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

**24-26.** *Father. I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name,*

"Thy character, thy work," —

**26.** *And will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

This prayer is for you, and for me, as much as for the twelve apostles. May the Lord fulfill it in all of us as well as in them, for his dear name's sake!

Amen.

## **JOHN 17:1-12**

**1.** *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come;*

This is in a very special sense our Lord's prayer. What a word that is from the lips of Jesus, "Father"! This was the night of his deepest sorrow and his heaviest woe, but he begins his prayer with this tender expression, "Father, the hour is come;" the hour of darkness, the hour of his passion and death, had now arrived.

**1.** *Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

Did Jesus look upon his suffering as his glory? He does not merely pray, "Sustain thy Son," but, "Glorify thy Son." In truth, our Lord's lowest stoop was his highest glory. He was never more resplendent than when he hung upon the cross, that was his true spiritual throne, so he prayed, "Glorify thy Son," — Enable him to

bear the agony, and to pass through it to the glory.” “That thy Son also may glorify thee.” The death of Christ was a great glorifying of God. We see his love and his justice rendered more glorious in the death of Christ than they would have been by any other method.

*2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

In this verse you get the doctrines of general and particular redemption blended. By his death, Christ obtained power over all flesh; his death had some relation to every man, but the special object of it was the salvation of the elect. The purpose of the shower is to water one particular field; but the rain falls everywhere, so plenteous is the bounty of God. The object of Christ’s atonement is to purchase eternal life for those who were given to him by his Father; but he has also obtained power over all flesh.

*3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

To know God, is eternal life. If you know God, if you know Jesus Christ whom he has sent, you are spiritually quickened. That knowledge has brought to you, nay, it is, in itself, the new life: “This is life eternal,” — not life for a few years but life eternal. Mark the final perseverance of the saints, how they shall hold on and hold out for ever.

*4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

Jesus regards his work as already done, although he had yet to die, to pay the ransom price for his people, yet by a leap of holy faith he says, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

*5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

Jesus had laid aside his glory for our sakes, now he asks that, his work being regarded as done, his glory may be given to him again.

*6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me: and they have kept thy word.*

God’s people belong to him, he gives them to his Son, Christ gives them his word, and they keep it: “They have kept thy word.”

Do we keep God's word? Do we hold to it? Do we make it the guide of our whole life? Do we seek to obey it? This is the token of God's chosen people.

*7-12. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine 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 thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

Christ always has kept his people, he still keeps his people, and he will keep his people for ever. The sheep shall be delivered into the hand of the Father in full number, there shall not be one of them missing in that day when they shall pass under the rod of the great Shepherd.

We cannot read all this prayer of our Lord tonight; we must now go, in the language of the next chapter, with the Master into the garden of his grief.

This exposition consisted of readings from John 17:1-12, And 18:1-14.

## **JOHN 17:15-26**

We will read this evening a portion of two prayers offered by our Divine Lord and Master on that night in which he was betrayed. The first is that memorable intercessory prayer of his recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel according to John.

*15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil.*

Christ did not pray that his disciples should be taken out of the world. It is very seldom that we ought to present such a petition. If that had been a proper prayer for us to offer, it would have been authorized by the Master. There are times when, in great pain of body, or in deep depression of spirit, the believer, like Elijah under

the juniper tree, requests for himself that he may die. If you ever do pray such a prayer, utter it very softly, for the Master does not authorize it, and that is a matter that must be left to the Lord of life and death. Jesus says here, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Sin is the real evil of the world; the danger of our being entangled in worldly customs, or dropping into the evil ways of an ungodly generation. Christ does pray that we may be kept from the evil that is in the world; and we also may and must pray that the Lord will keep us from the evil by which we are surrounded, and especially from the evil one who seeks our destruction.

**16. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.***

"They are of another race: they are swayed by other motives, they have another life; they have another destiny; 'They are not of the world.'" Is that true of you, dear hearer? We are reading out of God's Book, remember. This is the description of Christ's people; does it describe you? "They are not of the world: 'they are not worldly, they are other-worldly; their thoughts and hearts are set upon the world to come'".

**17. *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.***

What! Do they need to be sanctified? They are not of the world, and are kept from the evil in the world; do they need to be sanctified? Yes we shall always need sanctifying until we reach our heavenly home, where sin cannot enter. Every day we need the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit to lead us unto holiness. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." It is only the truth of God that can beget holiness; false doctrine is never the medium of sanctification. You can tell which are false doctrines, and which are the true, by our Lord's own test: "By their fruits ye shall know them." The same men who reject the old-fashioned doctrines also rebel against the old-fashioned style of living; loose living generally goes with loose doctrine. There never was an age in which the doctrines of grace were despised but, sooner or later, licentiousness prevailed. On the other hand, when we had Puritan teaching, we had also pure and holy living. This prayer is still needed for all Christ's disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

**18.** *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

This is the original Missionary Society, and the model for all others; Christ sent, missioned, of the Father, and every saint missioned of Christ. Are you carrying out your mission, O ye people of God? How dare you call yourselves by that name if you have no mission to anybody? If you are living here for yourself alone, how can you belong to Christ, who never lived a moment for himself, but always lived wholly for others?

**19.** *And for their sakes I sanctify myself,*

“I set myself apart, as one who is consecrated, dedicated, devoted to a grand design.”

**19.** *That they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

This is our Lord’s prayer for his disciples. In the ninth verse we read, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

Now our Lord Jesus prays for those who are to be his people. I wonder whether there are any of them here tonight.

**20.** *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word;*

There is a great company of people who are not at present believers, but who shall yet believe on Christ through the testimony of those who are already believers on him. O God, call out many such through our word I pray.

**21.** *That they all may be one;*

This is Christ’s prayer for all those who shall believe on him, that they may be converted, and brought into the one Church together with those who are already there:” that they all may be one.”

**21.** *As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

Christ would have all his people joined in communion with himself, and with his Father; and when that is the case, then will men know that Christ came into the world for a definite purpose: “that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

**22-23.** *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;*

Christ is the incarnation of God, and the Church should be the incarnation of Christ. Oh, when shall this great prayer be answered?

**23-26.** *And that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for those lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

A very short time after our Divine Lord offered this intercessory supplication, he prayed a very different prayer, in a strangely-altered style. You will find it in the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter twenty-six. Remember that there was a very short interval between the utterance of the majestic prayer I have been reading, and the presentation of the cries and tears of which we are now to read.

This exposition consisted of readings from John 17:15-26; And Matthew 26:36-46.

## **JOHN 18:1-9**

**1, 2.** *When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place:*

He was familiar with the Master's place of retirement for private prayer and he had, doubtless, heard the Master pray there. Yes, and many a Judas knows the place where the saints meet for worship, and knows the communion table too, and knows some of the most hallowed gatherings of God's people where they pour out their hearts in private prayer; and the pity is that, knowing all that, too, the ancient Judas and the modern one do not savingly know the Master himself.

**2.** *For Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.*

If ever any man might have lived without prayer, it was our Lord Jesus Christ. His humanity was perfect, yet he abounded in prayer; and the nearer we grow to Christian perfection the more shall we pray. I heard of one who said that she was so perfectly acquiescent in the will of God that she had left off praying, she had got beyond that! What a fearful delusion! God save all of us from ever falling into it! Here is One who could say from his heart, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." He expressed in prayer his perfect acquiescence in his Father's will, Did Christ, our Lord and Master pray so, and will any who profess to be his followers speak so presumptuously as to say that they can live without prayer? God forbid!

**3.** *Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

What strange paraphernalia they brought with them to the garden of Gethsemane,- "lanterns" to show them the way to the Sun of righteousness, "torches" with which to find out the bright and morning Star and "weapons" with which to overcome the Lamb of God, who had nothing to oppose to them but his own innocence.

**4.** *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?*

It is a wonderfully suggestive thought that Jesus knew everything that would happen to him. Martyrs and other sufferers for Christ's sake have had some measure of foresight of what they had to endure; but none of them could have so exquisite a foretaste of everything as our blessed Lord had. He knew it all, —every single atom of pain, and anguish, and heartbreak. He knew it all, yet he calmly "went forth" to meet it, and said to those who came to drag him away to his death, "Whom seek ye?"

**5, 6.** *They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.*

"Jesus saith unto them, I am;" as though appropriating to himself the name of Jehovah, and "they went backward, and fell to the ground," astounded and confounded. Even though he restrained his

omnipotence, he claimed the omnipotent name I AM, and before the majesty of that name they prostrated themselves upon the ground.

*7-9. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.*

That was a very gracious saying of Christ's, "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." This is what Christ says on his people's behalf to death, and to the law and the justice of God, and though this saying does not excuse the disciples' flight, it does make some sort of apology for their going away every man to his own home. Christ knew that they would be safer there. One of them followed him afar off instead of going his way, and you know what came of it. There is a time for openly following Christ, and there is a time when Jesus says, "Let these go their way." So, right to the end he takes care of his sheep and bids them scatter for a while now that the sword is about to enter their Shepherd's heart.

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 17, AND 18:1-9.

## **JOHN 18:1-9**

*1. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.*

Our Lord could not cross that "brook Cedron" without being reminded of the time when David went that way in the hour of his sorrow, though he knew that he had to face a far greater trial than that of David. The very brook would remind him of his approaching sacrifice, for through it flowed the blood and refuse from the temple.

*2. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.*

The place of our Lord's frequent retirement for private prayer was well known to Judas, who had often gone there with his Lord and his fellow disciples.

*3. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

How completely the traitor must have been in the power of Satan, and how hardened and callous he must have grown, that he could lead “thither” the men who were going to arrest the Saviour! Truly it was by wicked hands that Christ was taken, and crucified, and slain; yet, unconsciously, these evil men were carrying out “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” How strangely were they equipped for their deed of darkness! “With lanterns and torches and weapons.” They were coming to the Light of the world bearing “lanterns and torches”; and armed with “weapons” that they might use against “the Lamb of God.” If he had wished to deliver himself, all their “weapons” would have been in vain, and their “lanterns and torches” would not have revealed him, even with the help of the full moon, which was probably shining at the time.

*4, 5. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.*

Notice, dear friends, that the word “he” is in italics, showing that it is not in the original. Our Lord here twice used the name of Jehovah, I AM,— as he did on certain other memorable occasions. It was most fitting that, as he was going out to die, he should declare that it was no mere man who was about to suffer on the cross, but that, while he was truly man, he was also “very God of very God.”

*6. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.*

The simple utterance of his name drove them from him, and smote them to the earth; what would have happened if he had put forth his almighty power?

*7-9. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.*

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 17.; AND 18:1-9.

## **JOHN 18:1-14**

*1. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron,*

A dark, foul brook, through which flowed the blood and refuse from the temple. King David crossed that brook one night in bitter sorrow; and now the Saviour crossed it when it was near to midnight: "He went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron."

**1-2.** *Where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.*

Our Lord went there to pray, and Judas knew that this was his custom. Are we such men of prayer that others know where we pray? Have you some familiar place where you go to meet your Lord? I am afraid that many know where we trade, and many know where we preach, but perhaps, few know where we pray. God grant that we may be often at the mercy-seat! We should be better men and women if we were more frequently at the throne of grace.

**3.** *Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

"Lanterns" to give light to the Sun, "torches" to find out the Light of the world; "Weapons" with which to fight with the Lamb of God, the unarmed Sufferer. Strange treatment this for him who came to save and bless!

**4, 5.** *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he.*

Or, "I am." It is remarkable that Jesus should, in his betrayal, twice use this expression, thus uttering the very name of Jehovah.

**5.** *And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.*

What a hardened wretch he must have been to be able to stand with them! One would have thought that, having betrayed his Master, he would have hidden himself away for shame, but no, "Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them." His heart must have been steeled.

**6.** *As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.*

Christ's almighty power cast them down at once. He needed not to lift his hand or even his finger; he only said, "I am," and "they went backward, and fell to the ground."

7. *Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye, And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.*

Do they return again to the fray? Having once felt Christ's divine power, do they summon courage enough to attack him again? Yes, for there is no limit to the malice and impudence of the human heart.

**8-10.** *Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. Then Simon Peter—*

Always ready to boil over, ever full of zeal and rash impetuosity, Peter —

**10.** *Having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.*

Peter struck at his head; he was not content with trying to wound, he meant to kill Malchus, and he did "cut off his right ear."

**11-14.** *Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.*

Saying a great deal more than he thought he was saying, for he uttered a great Gospel truth when he said, "It was expedient that one man should die for the people."

This exposition consisted of readings from John 17:1-12, And 18:1-14.

## **JOHN 18:1-27**

**1.** *When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.*

From our Lord's example, we should learn, when trouble is near, to meet it with composure. Our Saviour did not sit still; but, as the hour approached for his betrayal and death, "he went forth with his disciples." The passing over the black brook of Cedron, through which flowed the filth of the temple, was very significant. King

David had crossed that brook long before when he had been driven from his home by Absalom's rebellion, and now the greater David went "over the brook Cedron, where was a garden." He specially wanted solitude just then, for one of the best preparations for suffering is to get alone with God. Learn this lesson also from your Lord's example, and as he put Gethsemane before Calvary, if you can put an hour of prayerful contemplation before your expected suffering, it will be a great help to you.

*2. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.*

That dark and gloomy olive garden was no pleasure garden that night. It had often been a place of retirement and of prayer for the Master. What happy memories his disciples must have had of being with him there for a season of prayer! It was a very choice privilege for them to be with him when he preached, but it must have been, if possible, a still greater privilege to be with him when he prayed. It is not recorded that his disciples ever said to him, "Lord, teach us how to preach;" but at least one of them was so struck with his prayers that he said, "Lord, teach us to pray." We may well ask him to do that for us now. Perhaps some of you would like to be taught how you can become great; it is much more important for you to be taught to become prayerful.

*3. Judas then, having received a hand of men and of officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

It does not matter much about the band of men and officers with lanterns and torches and weapons, but the dreadful part of the narrative is that they were led by one who had been a disciple of Christ, one who had been numbered with the apostles. Is Christ still betrayed by his professed friends? Yes, it is so, but may you and I never be guilty of that terrible crime! Yet why should we not unless the grace of God should prevent it? We are of the same flesh and blood as Judas; and although we might not be tempted by a sum of money, we may be tempted by a sinful pleasure or by a sinful shame. Lest we should be led astray, let us pray that we may not enter into temptation, and especially ask that we may be preserved from betraying our Lord, as Judas did.

4. *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?*

Because of his divinity, he knew all that would come upon him, but what a wondrous manhood his was that, although he knew all that would befall him, he went forth calm and composed, resigned to his Father's will and said to those who had come to seize him, "Whom seek ye?" I think he is saying to some of us, "whom seek ye?" We have not come here to slay him; we have not come here to fight against him, and lead him away to crucify him; yet I hope that we can truly say that we have come seeking Jesus. If this be really your heart's desire, it shall surely be fulfilled to you.

5. *They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he.*

Or, rather, "I Am," pronouncing the words with a divine dignity which had a startling effect upon them.

5, 6. *And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.*

It seems as if our Lord intended to let them realize something of his divine power and glory, for the utterance of that august expression, I am which is his Father's name, staggered them, and they fell to the ground. Do you not wonder that they did not rise up, and go away and leave him after they had fallen at his feet and asked his forgiveness? They did not so act, for the power of fear when it is not accompanied by love is very small. There was enough power in it to make them fall down to the ground, but there was not power enough in it to make them fall at Christ's feet confessing their sin.

7, 8. *Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:*

It is very cheering to us to think of our Lord meeting all the enemies of his people, gathering up all their weapons into his own heart that his people might go free. You and I, if we had been in such a case, would have been hurried and worried, and our fears would have made us selfish. We should have forgotten our poor friends who were with us; but Jesus thought not of himself, he

thought of his poor trembling disciples, and therefore he said, "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

**9.** *That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.*

He had only said that just a little while before, but this verse shows us that the New Testament is as sure to be fulfilled as the Old Testament. It was a new saying, not then written, yet it had all the life and power of God in it; so it must live, and must be fulfilled.

**10.** *Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.*

Here is every prospect of a fight. Simon Peter has begun it, and the armed men will be eager to continue it. We always have our Simon Peters about, — men of emotion, men of impulse, men of impetuosity. They are not a bad sort of Christians, and I do not know what we should do without them. Our cold, frozen thinkers would not do much without our warmhearted Peters to help to thaw them. Still, Peter was only one of the twelve apostles; and though they call him the head of the church, he made a very poor head of the church just then. He drew a sword, and began to use that carnal weapon by cutting off the right ear of Malchus. It was a great mercy that the Lord was there to heal the ear, and to forbid the use of the sword in his defense.

**11.** *Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

Here is another helpful lesson for any of you who have a trial before you. Do not seek to set the trial aside, use no wrong means to escape from affliction; drink your ordained cup. Though Peter's sword is handy, put it up into its sheath, and do not use it. Bear and forbear, on and on and on to the end of the chapter. Drink the cup that your Father gives you. However bitter it is, it is sweetened by the fact that he gives it to you. Shall not a true son of God drink the cup that his Father presents to him? There can be no harm in it, and it must work you some real good; so put up your sword, and lift the cup to your lips, and drink it to the dregs.

**12.** *Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, —*

When you are bound with sickness, or bound with weakness, or bound in any other way, do not complain. Your Master was bound, and I think we ought to be willing to be anything that Christ was. What was good enough for him is good enough for us. "They took Jesus, and bound him," —

**13, 14.** *And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.*

Christ could not die without the question of expediency turning up. I never knew any great sin in the world, nor any great heresy, nor any great combination of men to maintain it without the question of expediency coming under consideration. Expediency is the great Christ-killer. Many nowadays say to us, "Do not preach against error; it is not expedient to do so. Do not break away from evil associations; it is not expedient." How many there are of even good men who do certain thing, not because they are right, but because they are expedient! But, believers in Jesus, in the name of your Lord I implore you to hate expediency, since it put Christ to death. It was a wicked expediency that would murder Christ in order to save a nation; but it did not really do so after all, for the guilt of slaying Christ brought upon the nation the glaring crime of deicide.

**10.** *And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.*

This other disciple was, no doubt, John, who thus veiled himself as he did on other occasions.

**16.** *But Peter stood at the door without.*

It would have been better for him if he had kept there, he would probably have been more out of the way of temptation than he was inside the palace of the high priest.

**16.** *Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.*

John doubtless acted thus out of kindness to Peter, but he was the means of bringing his friend into a place where he was not strong enough to keep his feet. You and may act like that, perhaps,

in perfect innocence, and even with commendable kindness; yet we may be unintentionally doing our friends a great wrong. I notice that John seems to have been the first of the apostles to associate with Peter after that terrible fall of his; and in his record of Peter's denial of his Lord he does not mention his cursing and swearing as Matthew and Mark do. He appears to have felt great tenderness towards Peter; perhaps all the more so because he had been the innocent means of getting him into the place of temptation.

**17.** *Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.*

As, Peter! Ah, myself! If anyone is trusting in himself, he may soon utter a falsehood concerning his Lord, as Peter did. Keep us, O God, by thy grace, or else it will be so with us. It was nothing but a poor maidservant that cowed this brave Peter; the man whose sword was drawn just now in his Master's defense is not able truthfully to answer the maid's question, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not."

**18.** *And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold: and they warmed themselves and Peter stood with them and warmed himself.*

While his Lord and Master was being maltreated and abused over yonder at the end of the hall, Peter was warming himself at the servant's fire. Ah! he was getting cold spiritually while warming himself physically; and it sometimes happens that, when men are warming their bodies, they are at the same time cooling their hearts. I have known a man warm himself at a very big fire through coming into possession of a large amount of property, but he has also grown very cold spiritually for these coals of fire do not warm the heart.

**19-21.** *The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto thee: behold, they know what I said.*

Our Lord's teaching was never deceptive, he did not say one thing and mean another. He could truly appeal to his hearers concerning his teaching. It is a great thing for a preacher to be able to feel that his hearers know what he has said to them. We cannot

always say that, for some of them forget, and some of them do not understand what we say. Some of them do not give sufficient attention to know what it is that is said, but Christ's preaching was so clear and plain that he could truly say, "Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said."

**22, 23.** *And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying Answerest thou the high priest so?*

Jesus answered him, Not as Paul did, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." The Master is superior to the disciple at all points. Jesus said: —

**23.** *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?*

Let us pray that, whenever we are despitely treated, we may keep our temper, and be as composed as our Lord was; and if we must make an answer to our accusers, let it be as discreet and as justifiable as this answer of our Lord was.

**24, 26.** *Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself.*

John thus resumes the narrative concerning Peter from the 17<sup>th</sup> verse:

"Simon Peter stood and warmed himself."

**25.** *They said therefore unto him.*

Two or three or more of them speaking at a time said to him: —

**26-27.** *Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again:*

Ah, me! they who lie once will be all too apt to lie again; those who deny Christ once will be apt to go to still greater lengths in their denial of him. May they be stopped as Peter was!

**27.** *And immediately the cock crew.*

May the cock crow for some who have been asleep up till now, and warn them that the night is far spent, and that it is time for them to awake out of sleep, and wash their eyes with tears, and repent of having denied their Lord!

## **JOHN 18:12-14, 19-24**

The passages, which we are about to read from three of the Evangelists, make up a continuous narrative of our Lord's trial before the high priest. First, John gives us an account of our Saviour's appearance before Annas, of which I need not say much, as I recently preached upon it.

**12-14.** *Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that came year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.*

**19-21.** *The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.*

What an admirable answer that was! Whatever he might have said about his doctrine, they would have twisted into a ground of accusation against him, so he simply said, "Mine has been public teaching, open to all. I was not found in holes and corners, secretly fomenting sedition. I spoke in the streets; I spoke in the synagogue; I spoke in the temple; ask those who heard me to tell you what I said." What more convincing answer could he have given?

**22-24.** *And when he had thus spoken, one of the officer, which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of His hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me. Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.*

So there we see him standing, bound, before Caiaphas, the acting high priest for that year.

Now follow the narrative as given by Mark. (See MARK 14:53-65)

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 18:12-14,19-26; MARK 14:53-65; and LUKE 22:63-71; 3:1.

## **JOHN 18:12-27**

**12, 13.** *Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.*

Annas had been high priest before, and he seems to have been regarded still as high priest and to have been a leading spirit amongst the adversaries of Christ. The old sinner would not go to bed that night until he had seen the man whom he hated brought bound before him. Sometimes hatred becomes a more powerful passion than even love; and here, while the disciples of Jesus all fled in terror, Annas, the Saviour's bitter foe, was wide awake, and awaiting his arrival with those who had taken him captive.

**14.** *Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.*

Therein uttering a prophecy which he did not himself fully understand, speaking like another Balaam, through whom God spoke the truth, as once he did through the ass that Balaam rode. Sometimes, God makes the basest men the unconscious utterers of truth which they do not themselves comprehend.

**15.** *And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple:*

Here is John's usual modesty, he will not mention his own name, but simply speaks of "another disciple."

**15, 16.** *That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without.*

John boldly followed Jesus, and so was safe, Peter stood at a distance from his Lord, and so was in danger.

**16-18.** *Then went out that other disciple which was known unto the high priest and spake unto her that kept the door and brought in Peter. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter. Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold: and they warmed themselves; and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.*

Peter was in bad company; while he was warming his body, his soul was growing cold to his Master. Men cannot go into bad company without getting some hurt. It is said by a quaint old writer

that, if men go to Ethiopia, they may not become Ethiopians, but by the scorching of the sun they will grow blacker than they were before. It is always better to keep out of harm's way if we can. He that would not fall into a ditch should take care not to walk near the edge of it; so, if Peter wanted to stand fast, he should not have gone where he would be sure to be tempted.

**19.** *The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.*

This was a sort of preliminary examination before the Sanhedrin should try him officially.

**20-22.** *Jesus answered him I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?*

Here we get an exposition of one of Christ's own sayings. You know that he said, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Of course, Christ would carry out his own precept, so we see that he did not mean that his disciples were literally to turn the other cheek to those who struck them, but that they were to bear such treatment patiently, and not to give a railing answer. See how Jesus himself turned the other cheek.

**23.** *Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?*

Nothing could have been more calm or more dignified, and, at the same time, more full of the spirit of forgiveness.

**24-27.** *Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.*

We know that the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. He did not speak a word, perhaps lest Peter should fall into the hands of

those who were round about him; but his look was sufficient to kindle in Peter the fires of repentance, and he went out to weep bitterly over his shameful denial of his Lord.

### **JOHN 18:15-18; 25-27**

**15.** *And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple:*

That is John, of course; he never mentions his own name if he can help it.

**15, 16.** *That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.*

I always fancy that John had a greater tenderness for Peter because he was the means of getting him into the palace of the high priest. Peter could not have got in if he had been alone, but John was known to the high priest, and so secured his admission. He must always have felt sorry that he took Peter into a place where he was so strongly tried. Hence John sought him out after his great fall; when perhaps the other apostles were inclined to leave him by himself, John cheered him up, and brought him back to the faith.

**17, 18.** *Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.*

That was a very dangerous place for Peter to be in; he would have been safer out in the cold.

**25.** *And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself.*

Twice over, we are told that, while his Master was being buffeted, Peter stood in the midst of the ribald throng, and warmed himself.

**25-27.** *They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.*

Thus was Christ's prediction literally fulfilled, and thus, by what seems the humble instrumentality of a cock crowing, was Peter brought to repentance. There is many an eloquent divine who has missed the mark when he has been preaching, but God has spoken by a very humble voice. You, dear friend, though you have no gifts of speech, may go and tell the story of Jesus Christ to someone, and God may bring him to repentance through you, as he brought Peter back to himself through the agency of this bird. May God make us all useful, and keep us from falling into transgression as Peter did! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from MARK 14:27-31; 53, 54; 66-72; and JOHN 18:15-18; 25-27.

### **JOHN 18:28-38**

**28-38.** *Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. Then. Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom there of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.*

Thus did all who came into contact with Jesus bear witness that the Lamb of God was indeed “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.”

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 27:15-54; AND JOHN 18:28-38.

### **JOHN 18:28-40**

**28;** *Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment:*

That is to say, Pilate’s hall. Pilate, at that time, was probably residing in one of the old and sumptuous palaces of Herod, there holding His court during the time of the Passover.

**28.** *And it was early;*

They were very eager to prove their enmity to Christ; they had spent the night, and the earliest moments of the dawn, in examining their illustrious prisoner, condemning him, and abusing him, and now they were off to Pilate.

**28.** *And they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.*

What could defile such wretches at these? Yet they were afraid of ceremonial defilement, though neither afraid nor ashamed to imbrue their hands in the blood of Jesus.

**29.** *Pilate then went out unto them,*

He loathed and detested them, yet, for his own evil purposes, he would yield to their wishes and whims.

**29, 30.** *And said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.*

As much as to say, “You may take that for granted. We would not have brought him if he had not done wrong. You need not examine into the matter, we have already heard the evidence, and convicted him, and so saved you all the trouble of trying him; we only bring him here for you to condemn him.”

**31.** *Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.*

“That is your way of doing such things, but it is not a method into which we shall fall. Our law does not condemn a man before it hears the evidence against him. I am not going to be your tool, to

put this man to death without hearing what is laid to his charge, and the proofs of his guilt. If you want that done, you must do it yourselves.”

**31.** *The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:*

“You Romans have taken from us the power of life and death, and we want him put to death.” There was a clear confession that nothing short of Christ’s death would satisfy them.

**32.** *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.*

Crucifixion was a Roman, not a Jewish method of capital punishment, so God overruled the wanton wickedness of the worst of men for the accomplishment of his own eternal purposes, without, however, diminishing their responsibility and guilt in the least degree. It was “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” that Christ was put to death, yet it was “with wicked hands” that they took him, and crucified him.

**33.** *Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?*

He did not look much like it. There was little enough about his appearance or his apparel to suggest the idea of royalty.

**34, 35.** *Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew?*

I can imagine him throwing all the scorn and contempt possible into the question. It was characteristic of the Romans, as we learn from the works of their great writers, that they utterly despised and detested the Jews.

**35-37.** *Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee, unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I unto the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*

We might have expected that he would have said, “I came into the world that I might be a king.” But he explains that, as a Witness to the truth, he was a King.

**38.** *Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.*

He did not want an answer. He merely thought it such an unnecessary piece of trifling to talk about truth, he himself had so slight an idea of what the word might mean, that when he had said, “What is truth?” “he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.” That was the truth about the Truth, from the lips of a man who cared nothing about truth, yet who was compelled to bear this testimony, “I find in him no fault at all.”

**39.** *But we have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?*

Now, Pilate may have thought, if Christ was their King, they would certainly prefer him to a thief and a robber; so he was putting before himself an opportunity of escaping from judging Christ, and before them a test as to whether there really was in them any liking for the Christ, or any possibility of his becoming their King.

**40.** *Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.*

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 18:28-40; AND PSALM 2.

## **JOHN 19:1-16**

**1-3.** *Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe. And said, Hail, King of the Jews!*

Just as they were gathered to say, “Ave Imperator” — “Hail emperor” — so imitating that word which they applied to Caesar. and applying it to Jesus in mockery. “King of the Jews,” the utmost scorn was thrown into the last word, “of the Jews.” There had been a general tradition that there should arise among the Jews a king who would subdue the nations, and the Romans jested at the very thought

that they should be conquered by the leader of such a despised race as the Jews, and so they said, “King of the Jews.”

**3, 4.** *And they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.*

That is the second time he said it. He had declared it before; in the 38<sup>th</sup> verse of the previous chapter we read, “I find in him no fault at all.” And now again, “That ye may know that I find no fault in him.” “Then came Jesus forth” — you can see him going down the steps out of Pilate’s hall into that same courtyard — “wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them” — “Ecce Homo” — “behold the man.” He does not call him king; he only gives him the title of man. As if to say, “How foolish are you to think there is any danger from him; look at him in all his suffering and shame.”

**5, 6.** *Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.*

That is the third time. It was well that he who had the principal hand in the slaughter of the Lamb of God should make his report that he was “a Lamb without blemish and without spot”; and, therefore, fit to be presented in sacrifice before God. For the third time he doth acquit him. The Jews answered him, “We have a law” — it may not be your law — “and by our law he ought to die because he made himself the son of God.” This is a reviving of the charge of blasphemy which they had brought against him in the palace of the high priest.

**7, 8.** *The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid:*

It shows he was afraid all along — the coward — the vacillating coward — and now a fresh superstition seizes upon him. He believed, as a Roman in gods many. “What?” said he to himself. “What if, after all, I should have been torturing a divine Being, a God who has come among men in their likeness?”

**9-10.** *And went again, into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. The, saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I hate power to crucify thee, And have power to release thee?*

And he trembled with fear, “and went again into the judgment, hall,” taking his prisoner with him — you can see the two sitting there alone — “and saith unto Jesus, ‘Whence art thou? Tell me now, what is thy character, thine origin, thy rank? ‘But Jesus gave him no answer.’” Pilate’s day of grace was over; he had had his opportunity, but that was now ended; there was no answer. It is a very solemn thing when God gives no answer to a man; when a man turns to Scripture, but there is no answer; when he goes to hear the voice, but there is no voice from the oracle for him; when he even bows the knee in prayer, but gets no answer. The silence of the Christ of God is very terrible. “Then saith Pilate unto him,” with all the pride of a Roman in his face, “Speakest thou not unto me Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee?”

**11.** *Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*

“Thou hast the power to execute the sentence, lent to thee from heaven: but he that brought me here, and laid the charge against me, even Caiaphas, as the representative of the Jews, hath the greater sin.” And then the Blessed One closed his lips, never to open them again until on the cross. From this time, “like a sheep before her shearers,” he is dumb. Notice that even though that word is the word of the Judge who judges Pilate, who judges the Jews, yet there is a strain of the gentleness of his character about it, for though he does virtually declare Pilate guilty of great sin, yet he says there is a greater, and while there is no apology for Pilate, yet he puts it softly.

**12.** *And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out. saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.*

One of the Herods had put upon his coins the name, “Caesar’s friend.” and so they quoted the title which one of their kings had taken, and they tell Pilate that he will not be the friend of Tiberius. Here was a sore point with Pilate; he knew that just then Tiberius

was gloomy and morose, too ready to catch anything against his servants; and the man by whose influence Pilate had come into power had just then lost all influence at court. So he was afraid it would be his disgrace and discharge as governor if the Jews brought a charge against him to Tiberius. Therefore he trembled.

**13.** *When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.*

The usual form of the Roman judgment-place, in the open air, with a stone pavement, and a raised throne.

**14, 15.** *And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.*

“To crucify your king.” In bitter sarcasm: “You call him king, and ask to have him crucified.” “The Chief Priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar.’” Verily they thus proved the truth of that word, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come.” And here he was sent, of God. He has come at last, for the scepter has evidently departed from Judah; and these men are crying, We have no king but the alien monarch, the all-conquering Caesar.”

**16.** Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him away.

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 1:19-33; 19:1-16.

## **JOHN 19:1-37**

**1.** *Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.*

This was one of the most terrible punishments to which a man could be sentenced. The Roman scourge was no trifle. It tore off the quivering flesh of the agonized sufferer for it was constructed on purpose to do so. It was generally made of the sinews of oxen, intertwined with the knuckle bones of sheep, and small slivers of bone. This torture our blessed Saviour endured. These are the stripes with which we are healed.

*2. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,*

Mockery was blended with cruelty. They might have made him a crown, yet surely it need not have been one of thorns unless they intended to put him to the utmost torment that they could conceive. By this crown of thorns our blessed Lord was crowned King of the curse, for the earth was cursed through Adam's sin, and part of the sentence pronounced by God in the garden of Eden was, "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." So Christ wore the mark of the curse which man's sin had brought upon the world.

*3. And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.*

This was the homage which the Son of God received from men; harmless and gentle, he came here with no purpose but that of doing good, and this is how mankind treated him.

*4, 5. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!*

Was there ever such a sight of majesty in misery before or since? Yet he needed not to endure all that ignominy, he was no vanquished monarch unable to maintain his own rights. He was still "over all, God blessed for ever," and he could have smitten everyone there to death if he had pleased to do so. But he was the Lamb of God's passover, so he meekly suffered.

*6, 7. When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him. We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.*

They no doubt understood that he claimed to be divine, and so he did. I have heard some say that he was a good man, but not God. If he was not God, he was certainly not a good man, for no good man, who was only a man, would claim to be God, or lead others to believe that he was divine. If he was not actually divine, he was a rank impostor; but he was divine, and therefore we worship and adore him equally with the Father and the Spirit.

**8-10.** *When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?*

Pilate talks like some great one, yet how contemptibly little he was, vacillating, cowardly, unable to do what he knew was right. His poor Victim who stood before him was infinitely greater in character than he was.

**11.** *Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*

Christ referred to Judas, and through him to the Jews who had conspired to put him to death; but what tenderness it was, on the part of Jesus, to make an excuse as it were even for Pilate! He was notable for making excuses for the guilty. That was a remarkable excuse that he pleaded for his murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." There was never another such a tender heart as his; he was so gentle and so kind that all their cruelty only moved him to pity them, and pray for them.

**12-14.** *And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard that crying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!*

What mockery there was in Pilate's use of this title, and yet how true it was! They asked to have Christ put to death, yet he was their King. Their accusation was transparently false, and Pilate made them see that it was so.

**15-17.** *But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:*

The inspired writers seem to delight to give us the Hebrew names of these notable places that are linked with Christ's last agonies, and they are still very precious to Christians, Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha! , three names never to be forgotten by those who were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

**18.** *Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.*

As if to show that they thought him the worst of the three, and therefore gave him ! shall I call it the place of chief dishonour?

**19, 20.** *And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was near to the city and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.*

So that all who gathered around the cross might read it.

**21, 22.** *Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am king of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.*

He could be stubborn about some things which shows that he had strength of mind if he had chosen to use it; yet he was beaten to and fro like a shuttlecock by these wicked men, and seemed to have no power to resist them.

**23.** *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, !*

For they had stripped him. He must be naked, because sin makes us naked, and his garments must be a covering for us. They “took his garments,” —

**23, 24.** *And made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, !*

They knew nothing about that ancient prophecy, yet God ordained that they should act thus “that the Scripture might be fulfilled,” —

**24.** *Which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*

Doubtless, on the dice there fell the blood of Christ, yet they still gambled there. There is, perhaps, no sin which so effectually hardens the heart as that of gambling; it is a sin with which Christians should not have even the reluctant connection.

**25-30.** *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished;*

*Consummatum est.* "The work is done, redemption is accomplished; the salvation of my people is for ever secured."

**30-37.** *And he sowed his head, and gave up the ghost. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look upon him whom they pierced.*

### **JOHN 19:14-37**

**14.** *And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!*

They had accused him of being a King, or of pretending to be one. Pilate had scourged him, the soldiers had mocked him, and there he stood piteous spectacle of woe. What cruel sarcasm there was in the tones of the Governor when he said to the Jews, “Behold your King.”

**15.** *But they cried out, away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King?*

“How could you call him King, and bring against him a charge of setting up a rival kingdom when you, who would be his subjects, are all crying out, ‘Crucify him’? ‘Shall I crucify your King?’” How false they were their own actions proved.

**15.** *The chief priests answered, we have no king but Caesar.*

They said this with all the coolness in the world. The mob had been stirred up and excited, but the chief priests, the principal ecclesiastics of the day, coolly said, “We have no king but Caesar.” Did they not recollect that the scepter was not to pass away from Judah until Shiloh came, so that, as it had evidently passed away, Shiloh must have come? After all their Bible-reading, did they not know that? Oh, how easy it is to read much of Scripture and yet to know little about its teaching! Dear friends, let us not join the Jews in refusing to have Christ as King. They cried, “Away with him, away with him,” when he was set before them as King. Let us not do that, but let us rather accept the Crucified as our Master and Lord, and cheerfully bow at his feet.

**16.** *Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.*

So was he led as a sheep to the slaughter, as Isaiah had long before foretold that he would be.

**17.** *And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha:*

Probably a knoll of rock which today stands outside the city gate looking wonderfully like a skull, with two depressions in the rock which at distance appear like eyes. This was the common place of execution, the Tyburn, the Old Bailey of Jerusalem.

**18, 19.** *Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title and put it*

*on the cross. And the writing was, Jesus Of Nazareth The King Of The Jews.*

What could have moved Pilate to write that title? Perhaps he did it just to let the Jews know that they had forced him to put the Christ to death; he would put over him their accusation without any endorsement of his own: "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS;" and so he is, and King of the Gentiles, too.

**20.** *This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.*

So that everybody could read it, for some one or other of these languages would be known to everybody in the crowd; they were not dead languages then as they are now.

**21, 22.** *Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.*

He could sometimes be firm; perhaps when there was least excuse for it but when there was need of firmness, this vacillating Governor was swayed by the will of cruel men.

**23.** *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments.*

It was the custom with executioners to take the garments of the criminal.

**23.** *And made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat woven without seam, woven from the top throughout.*

The common robe of the country, for Christ assumed no garment or vesture that would make him seem great. He was too great to need the adornment of any special style of clothes.

**24.** *They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*

Those rough Roman soldiers knew nothing about the ancient prophecy, yet a divine destiny guided them. God's Word must be fulfilled; and they, in the freedom of their will, did exactly what God had ordained, and the Spirit had long before prophesied. There are two things that are true; ! that men act freely and are therefore

responsible when they sin, but that there is a divine predestination that rules all things according to the purpose and will of God. It would have puzzled us to explain how such a prophecy could be fulfilled at all, ! parting Christ's raiment among them, and then casting lots for his vesture; yet so it was, they divided what could be divided, and they cast lots upon what would have been spoilt if they had rent it. I think that no Christian man will ever like the rattle of dice when he remembers that they were used at the cross; all games of chance should be put away from us, for we can, as it were, see our Master's blood bespattered upon them.

**25, 26.** *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!*

“See in John one who will act as a son to thee.”

**27.** *Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!*

“John, take her home, and treat her as a mother should be treated.”

**27.** *And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*

He was the disciple whom Jesus specially loved, so as a token of Christ's great love to him, he left his mother to his charge. Have you any poor folk dependent upon you? Do you know any of God's very poor people? Take care of them, and do not think the charge a burden; but do it for the sake of him who loves you so much that he entrusts his poor ones to you. Oh, that everybody would look at this matter of caring for God's poor in that light!

**28.** *After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst!*

It seems a strange thing that Jesus should have said, “ I thirst,” because, out of all the pains that he endured upon the cross, and they were very many and very sharp, he never mentions one except thirst. A person in such terrible agony as he was enduring might have mentioned fifty things, but he singles out this one because there was a prophecy concerning it.

**29.** *Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.*

Why is hyssop mentioned here? You remember that the hyssop was used in the cleansing of the leper, and that David prayed, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” The hyssop was also used in the sprinkling of blood under the law, so it is introduced here with a set purpose. The sponge is introduced here too; it always seems to me very remarkable that, in the death of Christ the circle of life was completed. The sponge is the very lowest form of animal life, and Christ is the very highest type of life of any kind. The sponge was lifted to the lip of the King of glory, and carried refreshment to him; and you and I, like the sponge, the very least of God’s living ones, may yet bring refreshment to our Saviour’s lips.

**30.** *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

It is not that he died, and that then his head fell forward; but while he yet lived, having before maintained an erect, noble bearing even in the pangs of death, he now, to show his perfect resignation to his Father’s will bows his head, and yields up that saved spirit of his which dwelt within his body.

**31.** *The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day, for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*

The breaking of the legs was intended to hasten death, ! a very cruel method, but a very effectual one. Passing by Christ hanging in the center it was a strange thing for them to do, yet it had to be done, although they were quite unconscious of the reason why they so acted.

**32-34.** *Then came the soldier, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side,-*

To make sure that he should not survive,!

**34-37.** *And forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.*

*And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.”*

So his side must be pierced, but his bones must not be broken. See how the hand of God carries out the Word of God, and value every line of Scripture. Our Lord Jesus Christ seemed to go out of his way so as to ensure that every single word in the Old Testament in reference to himself should be fulfilled, so mind that you do not think little of the Old Testament which he so highly prized.

### **JOHN 19:23-37**

**23.** *There the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments,*

They had already stripped him, no element of shame was wanting in his substitution for us. He stooped as low as our sins could have thrust us, that he might bring us up from the very depths of degradation and shame.

**23, 24.** *And made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat: now the coat was without seven woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*

Quite unaware of the ancient prophecy, yet in complete accord with divine predestination these soldiers did exactly according to the eternal purposes of God. It is very wonderful how, in practice, the free agency of man tallies exactly with the predestination of God. We need not enquire how it is, but we may admire that so it is. “These things therefore the soldiers did,” yet the motive which swayed them was not the fulfillment of the divine will, but simply the commonsense thought that it would be a pity to spoil such a garment by rending it apart ! also by that innate love of gambling which is found everywhere, in every age, so that often men would sooner run the hazard of winning all than take the safe one fourth which might fall to their lot. Let us reverently adore the whole scheme of providence by which God’s determinate purpose is carried out in every jot and little, while the free agency of man is left unfettered.

**25.** *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.*

These gracious women stood by the cross: we call them the feebler sex; but we must grant that they are the stronger of the two in anything which has to do with pure disinterested love. Yield the first place to them.

**26.** *When Jesus therefore saw his mother,*

Here was another pang for him: he could not be spared anywhere. He must recollect in his death everything that would cause him grief: "When Jesus therefore saw his mother," —

**26, 27.** *And the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother. Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*

There was no specific direction given to John to entertain Mary. It was quite enough for the Lord to call his attention to her by saying "Behold thy mother." How I wish we were always in such a state of heart that we did not need specific precepts, a hint would suffice. Dear friends, do not need pressing or driving to holy duty; be not as bullocks that must be goaded, but rather have within you such a spring of love that it shall be a delight to do anything that may give joy to the heart of the Well-beloved. When you see him on the cross, is there anything you can deny him? Will you not think spontaneously of what you can do to please him?

**28.** *After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.*

There was yet a little more to be done; all the great things were accomplished, but he would keep even the least particles of prophecy, so he cried, "I thirst."

**29, 30.** *Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, —*

He did receive that; he had refused the drugged draught which they had first offered to him to lull his pain, but he accepted this, which was simply weak wine, no doubt a little sour, possibly bitter. When he "had received the vinegar," —

**30.** *He said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

Incarnate love has fulfilled its self-imposed task. Jesus, as the substitute for sinners, was condemned to die, and he died that he might finish the work of our redemption.

“It is Finished.”

Hear the dying Saviour cry.”

**31.** *The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*

To prevent a ceremonial error, they are willing to commit brutal cruelty; indeed, they had already committed the more brutal cruelty of putting Christ to death. How particular some men are about some merely human rubric, yet the divine precepts of the law they violate with impunity. God save us from a conscience which will stick at home minute point which is of no consequence, but will allow us to commit great sin! We have heard of a Spanish bandit who confessed to his priest, after having murdered a great many persons, not his robberies and his murders, but the fact that a drop of blood had spurted on to his lips on a Friday, and thus he had defiled the feast day by taking animal food! Ah me! Conscience is a strange thing, yet some call it “the vicegerent of God.” I believe it is no such thing, but that it very soon becomes as depraved as any other power of the human mind: we have need of far more than conscience to keep us right.

**32.** *Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.*

With a huge iron bar smashing the great bones of their legs.

**33, 34.** *But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they broke not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced him twice, and forthwith there came out blood and water.* See how, even after death, his heart it tribute poured out for us. We have not only the love of Christ’s heart blessing us while he lives, but after he died there was the stream of blood and water to cleanse us from sins guilt and power.

**35-37.** *And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these*

*things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.*

### **JOHN 19:25-30**

**25.** *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.*

Last at the cross, first at the sepulcher. No woman's lip betrayed her Lord; no woman's hand ever smote him; their eyes wept for him; they gazed upon him with pitying awe and love. God bless the Marys! When we see so many of them about the cross, we feel that we honour the very name of Mary.

**26.** *When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith into his mother, Woman, behold thy son!*

Sad, sad spectacle! Now was fulfilled the word of Simeon, "Yes, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Did the Saviour mean, as he gave a glance to John, "Woman, thou art losing one Son; but yonder stands another, who will be a son to thee in my absence"? "Woman, behold thy son!"

**27.** *Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!*

"Take her as thy mother, stand thou in my place, care for her as I have cared for her." Those who love Christ best shall have the honour of taking care of his church and of his poor. Never say of any poor relative or friend, the widow or the fatherless, "They are a great burden to me." Oh, no! Say, "They are a great honour to me; my Lord has entrusted them to my care." John thought so; let us think so. Jesus selected the disciple he loved best to take his mother under his care. He selects those whom he loves best today, and puts his poor people under their wing. Take them gladly, and treat them well.

**27.** *And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home*

You expected him to do it, did you not? He loved his Lord so well.

**28.** *After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.*

There was a prophecy to that effect in the Psalms, and he must needs fulfill that. Think of a dying man prayerfully going through the whole of the Scriptures and carefully fulfilling all that is there written concerning him: “That the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus saith, I thirst.”

**29.** *Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar,*

For he did receive it. It was a weak kind of wine, commonly drunk by the soldiery. This is not that mixed potion which he refused, wine mingled with myrrh, which was intended to stupefy the dying in their pains: “When he had tasted thereof, he would not drink;” for he would not be stupefied. He came to suffer to the bitter end the penalty of sin; and he would not have his sorrow mitigated; but when this slight refreshment was offered to him, he received it. Having just expressed his human weakness by saying, “I thirst,” he now manifests his all-sufficient strength by crying, with a loud voice as Matthew, Mark, and Luke all testify.

**30.** *He said, It is finished:*

What “it” was it that was finished? I will not attempt to expound it. It is the biggest “it” that ever was. Turn it over and you will see that it will grow, and grow, and grow, and grow, till it fills the whole earth: “It is finished.”

**30.** *And he lowered his head, and gave up the ghost.*

He did not give up the ghost, and then bow his head, because he was dead; but he bowed his head as though in the act of worship, or as leaning it down upon his Father’s bosom, and then gave up the ghost. Thus have we had two gospel pictures of our dying Lord. May we remember them, and learn the lessons they are intended to teach.

This exposition consisted of readings from LUKE 23:33-46; JOHN 19:25-30

## **JOHN 19:38-42**

**38-40.** *And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also*

*Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus.*

Oh, how tenderly, and with how many tears, did they take their Lord's body from the cross!

**40-42.** *And wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulcher was nigh at hand.*

John's Gospel contains some particulars not mentioned by Mark; and the same may be said of Matthew's account, and Luke's. Read them all when you are at home, and ponder the wonderful story. The apostle Paul, speaking of our Lord's resurrection, mentions his burial. We will now read in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, just a few verses from the fifteenth chapter.

This exposition consisted of readings from MARK 15:34-47; JOHN 19:38-42; AND 1 CORINTHIAN 5:1-9.

## **JOHN 20:1-18**

**1.** *The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene ear/y, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher.*

Her love for her Lord made her rise early, and helped her to overcome the fear which would have prevented many from going out "when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher." There are fears which some cannot shake off in the dark, and those fears would be apt to become intensified in going to a sepulcher in the dark; but love wakes early to try to find Christ, and love can see in the dark when looking for Jesus. Mary little expected to find the tomb of Jesus rifled, and the stone rolled away; she was so surprised at what she saw that she hurried away to tell the story to other friends of her Lord.

**2.** *Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him.*

This was the language of ignorance and unbelief. She had forgotten that the Lord had said that he would rise again, the third day; or else she had never understood the meaning of his words; so, instead of saying "He is risen," she said, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him." Unbelief often reads things wrongly; it reads sorrow into facts that should create joy. Nothing could have made Mary happier than to believe that her Lord had risen from the dead, and nothing ever made her more sorrowful than feeling that she must say, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him."

**3, 4.** *Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulcher. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher.*

They wanted to know what had really happened, so they resolved that they would go and see. The woman's message surprised them, and troubled them: "So they ran both together." A good many people seemed to be running that morning. Had the disciples known the whole truth, they might have taken to dancing for joy, but their fears quickened their footsteps.

**5.** *And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; —*

So that he knew that they had not taken away the body of Jesus; for, if they had, they certainly would not have taken off the linen clothes. It would have been very difficult, and would have taken considerable time to unwrap the cold grave-clothes when they were bound to the body by the unguents that had been used: "He saw the linen clothes lying; " —

**5.** *Yet went he not in.*

Perhaps, out of reverence; or, possibly, out of deference to the older man, he would give him the preference, and let him enter first.

**6.** *Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie,*

They were evidently both struck with that sight. It indicated that there had been no haste, no hurry by thieves, but deliberate action of quite another kind.

*7. And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.*

As one has well said, there were the grave-clothes left as the furniture for the believer's last bed, and there was the napkin, "in a place by itself," to wipe away the tears of mourners. The chief lesson is that this act had been done at leisure by someone who was in no hurry whatever. He had put together the linen clothes, and wrapped up the napkin, and laid it "in a place by itself."

*8. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed.*

That is a great deal for John to be able to say concerning himself, for Mary had not yet believed. Possibly, Peter had scarcely believed, but John had. He felt certain that the Lord had risen. He remembered his words, and he correctly interpreted the fact now before him: "he saw, and believed."

*9. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.*

They did not understand it; even John himself did not until then. The rest of the disciples had never put that interpretation upon our Lord's words which was the clear and simple meaning of them, namely, that he would rise from the dead. I should not wonder if there are other words of Scripture, with regard to the future, which we should comprehend if we took them exactly as they stand in the Word; but we have put other meanings upon them, and consequently see no further into them.

*10. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.*

Having ascertained that the body of Jesus was not there, and John having come to the conclusion that the Lord had indeed risen from the dead, he and Peter went away home prayerfully to wait and see what next would happen.

*11. But Mary stood, —*

She was not going away home. Love cannot leave the place where it lost its object; it will continue to search there: "But Mary stood" —

*11. Without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked —*

Some can weep, but never look. Do not act so, beloved, but look for comfort even when your heart is breaking: “As she wept, she stooped down, and looked “ —

**11, 12.** *into the sepulcher, and seeth two angels in white —*

The resurrection color, the color of joy and gladness: “two angels in white”—

**12.** *Sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.*

I have no doubt that the angel who sat at the feet was quite as content to sit there as the other was to sit at the head. If any two of you are sent upon the Lord’s business, do not pick and choose as to where you shall be, or what you shall do. “One at the head, and the other at the feet.” I am afraid that, if they had been men instead of angels, both would have wanted to sit at the head, and the feet would have been neglected. This sight seems to remind one of the mercy-seat, where the cherubim stood facing each other, and covering the mercy-seat with their outspread wings.

**13.** *And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.*

Grief has not many words. It is apt to repeat itself, as the Lord himself did in Gethsemane when he prayed three times, using the same words.

**14, 15.** *And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?*

Christ often repeats the words of his messengers, as if to endorse them. The angels said, “Woman, why weepest thou?” The angels’ Master says the same. I pray him, tonight, not only to give me the right word to say, but also to say it himself to your hearts. But Jesus added another question to the angels’ “Woman, why weepest thou?”

**15.** *Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.*

Did it occur to her that, possibly, the gardener objected to having a corpse in the garden, and that, therefore, he had come early in the morning, and taken it away? We can hardly imagine what she did

think; but when people are in great grief, they often think a great many things which they would not think if they were quite in their right minds. What strange delusions, what singular chimeras of monstrous shape will pass through the heart of grief! God help us to be clear-minded, and not to think what we should not like to say! Still, Mary was a brave woman, for she said to the gardener, "Tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

**16.** *Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.*

She said, "My Master, my Rabbi, my Teacher, my Leader, my dear Master;" and I expect she said it with great exultation. She delighted to have her Master again, to have her Teacher again; for, to be without her Teacher, and without her Lord, was a terrible bereavement to that gentle, teachable heart. I suppose she was about to lay hold upon Christ, to grasp him by the feet, lest he should again go away from her.

**17.** *Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; —*

Or, as the words may be read, "Hold me not; detain me not; " —

**17.** *For I am not yet ascended to my Father:*

"I have to go away from you, so do not imagine that you can hold me back. Nay, the time for such communications with me is past, for I am now in another condition. I will communicate with you spiritually; but, for that, you must wait a little: 'I am not yet ascended to my Father.'"

**17.** *But go to my brethren, —*

He had never called them that before. "Brethren" he had called them, but not with the emphatic "my." "Go to my brethren," —

**17.** *And say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

Thus Christ explained to them that the Father, who is God, was God to Christ, and God to them; the Father of Christ, and their Father also.

**18.** *Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord,*

That was a very different message from her first one. Then she came and said, "He is gone; the tomb is empty; the stone is rolled

away;” now she comes with the joyful tidings, “I have seen our risen Lord.”

**18.** *And that he had spoken these things unto her.*

Sometimes, we have to deliver the message of stern justice, which is one of doom to the guilty; but, oh, how sweet it is to be able to come with the message of the gospel!

‘He lives; the great Redeemer lives.’

He lives to plead for sinners; so, sinners: come and trust him, for he will manifest himself to you as surely as he did to these disciples, though not in exactly the same form.

### **JOHN 20:11-29**

**11-12.** *But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.*

You see, dear friends, love is very patient and persevering. The other disciples had gone away home, but not so Mary, she stands outside the sepulcher, and still waits, for she cannot go till she has seen her Lord. Love, however, has many sorrows for, as Mary stood without the sepulcher, she was weeping. Oftentimes your love to Christ will make you sorrowful when you for a while lose his presence; it will be a great sorrow to you if your Lord should seem to have hidden himself from you. But see how quick-sighted love is; Mary saw the angels, whom the other disciples might have seen if they had not gone home. One of the beatitudes is, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God;” and love is one of the most eminent signs of purity. I do not wonder, therefore, that love saw angels, since love sees God himself.

**13.** *And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?*

They could not understand Mary’s tears, their question seemed to say “Christ the Lord is risen from the dead, and all the streets of heaven are ringing with hallelujahs because the great Conqueror has returned bearing the spoils of his victory. Why weepest thou? Art not thou one of those for whom this redeeming work was done? ‘Woman, why weepest thou?’”

**13.** *She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.*

That was enough to make any of Christ's loved ones weep, and if ever you hear a sermon which has not Christ in it, you may well go down the aisle weeping, and if any ask why you weep, you may reply, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

**14.** *And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.*

A strange and sad unbelief had taken possession of her, and there is nothing that blinds the eye so quickly as unbelief. Christ is near thee, poor soul, near thee in thy trouble, but thou dost not know that it is Jesus. Open thine eyes, may God the Holy Spirit touch them with his heavenly eye-salve, that thou mayest see that it is Christ himself who is close beside thee!

**15.** *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.*

Her supposition was wrong in one way, but right in another, for Jesus is the Gardener, and his Church is his garden. There was one gardener in whom we fell; here is another and a better Gardener in whom we rise. It is he, and he alone, who can properly tend all the plants of his Father's right-hand planting. He is the Gardener, though not the one that Mary supposed, but what a strange request this was for her to make: "If thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Could she have carried away the body of Jesus if it had been there? If so, what a ghastly load for her tender frame to bear! Ay, but she would have done it somehow or other; for, if faith laughs at impossibilities, and cries, "It shall be done," it is love that actually does the deed of holy daring. The task that seems well-nigh impossible is readily performed when the spirit is invigorated by love.

**16.** *Jesus saith unto her, Mary.*

In the simple utterance of her name, there were tones which she could not mistake, it was the sweetest music she had heard since her Lord's last message from the cross: "Mary." "Why, surely," she must have thought, "it was the Master's voice calling me by name!"

**16.** *She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.*

Or, “My Master!” The word “Rabboni” means something more than “Master.” Mary seems to say, “Greatest and best of all teachers, I know thy voice; now that thou hast called me by my name, I recognize thee, and I wait to listen to the instruction thou art ready to impart to me.”

**17.** *Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father:*

“There will be time enough for the fellowship your heart craves:” —

**17.** *But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

Practical service is better than personal rapture. Mary would fain have held her Lord, but he says to her, “Go to my brethren.” You will always find that it is best and safest to do what Jesus tells you, when he tells you, and as he tells you. What a delightful message is this from the risen Christ! “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”

**18, 19.** *Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*

If they had possessed more faith, they would have left a door open for Jesus to come in, however anxious they might have been to shut out the Jews. I am afraid, dear brethren and sisters, that we also are sometimes more anxious about shutting out the Jews than we are about letting in Christ. I mean, we are very particular in trying to keep out our own troubles and cares, but if we get Jesus within, we shall not think of the Jews, nor of our troubles and cares; they will all disappear as soon as he appears.

**20.** *And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*

That was enough to make them glad. The gladdest sight out of heaven, and the gladdest sight in heaven itself, is to see the Lord.

**21.** *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

“I am the Messiah, the sent One; you, too, shall be my missionaries, my sent ones;” it is but another form of the same word.

**22, 23.** *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

That is to say, “As you proclaim my gospel, I will back up your message; when you preach of pardoning blood, I will make it efficacious. When you declare to penitent sinners that their sins are remitted, it shall be so; and when you tell those who believe not that they are condemned already, and that except they repent they shall abide in condemnation, their sins shall still be retained.” The true minister of God speaketh not apart from the Word of God, and when he speaks the Word of God, the God of the Word is himself there to make it effectual. It shall be no brutum fulmen, no wasted thunderbolt; it shall fall in reality, and what the servant of Christ declares, according to the Scriptures, shall really be proved to be true.

**24.** *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.*

Possibly he did not go out of an evening; it may be that he was a half-dead sort of Christian, like a great many people are in London. They think they have done finely if they go out on the Sabbath morning, but the evening, — well, it is too cold for them, or they must find some other excuse for keeping indoors: “Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.” That was a great pity, because Thomas would not only be a loser by his absence, but he would be sure to influence others, for he was an apostle. Surely, whenever it is possible, we who are leaders in the church, ministers, deacons, and elders, should take care that we are not absent from the house of the Lord.

**25.** *The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.*

But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. There is something good about that declaration of Thomas, for a man is not bound to believe merely on the testimony of others. He should, if he can, endeavor to get evidence for himself, and as Christ is still alive, the very best thing is to go to him. But there was also much that Thomas said which was very wrong, he had no right to demand that he should see the nail prints in Christ's hands, and, worse still, that he should be permitted to put his finger into them, and to thrust his hand into his Lord's side. There was more than a little impertinence about that utterance, and something more even than an ordinary unbelief; and when we ask for signs and wonders from God, and say that we will not believe except we have them, we are guilty of very presumptuous conduct. We are bound to look for evidence concerning Christ; but when the evidence is sufficient, we ought not out of curiosity to crave for more.

**26.** *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them.*

That was an improvement upon the meeting of the previous Lord's-day evening; Thomas had learnt by this time what he had lost the week before, so he was present on this occasion.

**26, 27.** *Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas,*

Picking out the one who most needed to be addressed, like the Good Shepherd seeking out the sick sheep first: "Then saith he to Thomas," —

**27, 28.** *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*

It has been well observed that Thomas was the first person who ever proved to himself the Deity of Christ from the exhibition of his wounds. There is a good argument in it, which we cannot stay to explain at this time; but the very humanity of Christ has in it the doctrine of his Deity; you can easily argue from the one to the other.

How divine must he be who, in his condescension, took upon himself our nature!

*29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

That blessedness can be reached by all of us who believe in Christ. Those who lived in this world before Christ came, saw his day by faith, and they were blessed; those who lived in his day, and saw him in the flesh, and trusted him, were blessed; but we who cannot see him, yet believe in him,  
are the most blessed of them all.

### **JOHN 20:18-31**

*18. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.*

She was a true woman — one whom they had known well enough to be quite able to trust her, and her witness ought to have been believed, but there were some that doubted.

*19. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you.*

How he came there we do not know, but doors cannot shut him out. Is there any door between my soul and Christ tonight then? Have I shut myself up in the chamber of doubt, despondency, unbelief? He can come to me. While the doors are yet shut, he can appear within my spirit, and say, "Peace be to you. "Oh! that he would do so! Do we not cry to him to come and breathe peace upon us?

*20. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side.*

That they might be sure it was he — the same who had died by crucifixion — that they might see how intimate he was with them — familiar — that his scarcely healed wounds should be seen by them.

*20. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*

Oh! for such a sight! There is a depth of gladness in a risen Christ. Those wounds preach peace and joy.

**21-23.** *Then said Jesus to them again. Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

Thus did Jesus Christ support and make for ever true the probing of his word. Do we declare that the sins of penitents are remitted? They are remitted. Are we, in his name, bidden to declare that "he that believeth not shall be condemned"? So shall it be. He will make the word which is uttered to be true. We shall not speak without our Master making the utterance of his word to be readier of fact.

**24.** *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.*

Perhaps he lived a long way off, or else, being rather slow, he had stayed away, doubting, and fearing, and questioning, and he had not got there in time; anyhow, he was not there. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is," for it will be a loss to you, as it was to him.

**25.** *The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

Dogged, obstinate unbelief. Some have said he was a large-hearted man, who investigated truth. I do not see it. He had not gone to the tomb, like Peter and John, to look at the grave-clothes, and to discover that Christ was not there. He does not appear to have investigated the testimony of Mary Magdalene and of the others. He was just as narrow-minded as he very well could be, as I believe modern doubters are with all their boast of their wonderful thoughtfulness and liberality. We have only their own opinion, I am sure, upon that matter; and when a man sounds his own trumpet, there is not much in it.

**26, 27.** *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said he to Thomas.*

For our Lord has a way of making personal application of his word. He looks after the sheep that is sick, and severs it from the

flock, that he may deal with it in his wisdom. “Then saith he to Thomas.”

**27, 28.** *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*

And whether Thomas did put his finger into the print of his nails or not, we cannot tell. Everyone may think as he likes about that. He may have done so, or he may not, but this one thing happened, that he “answered and said unto him, ‘My Lord and my God.’” He made a splendid leap from the depths of doubt to the firm rock of confidence. With two blessed “mys” he seems to grasp Christ with both hands, and in two grand words he pictures him, “My Lord and my God.”

**29.** *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

That is the faith — the true faith — that wants no buttressing and props, but believes the testimony of God.

**30, 31.** *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God: and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

God grant that the object of writing the New Testament may be answered in each one of us.

## **JOHN 20:19-31**

**19.** *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*

He has not risen from the tomb many hours before we find him thus coming to his disciples. His love to them was too great to permit him to be long absent from them. He had said to them, “A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me;” so he kept his word. He stood in their midst, and said unto them, “Peace be unto you.” He is the Lord and Giver of peace

just as much now as he was then. Oh, that he would speak peace to the hearts of all his people now! May each believing soul among you have a deep peace! May all your troublous thoughts come to an end, and every anxious mind be calmed! Peace! Blessed peace. Oh, that the Spirit of peace would breathe it upon us all! "Peace be unto you."

**20.** *And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side.*

These were the marks to help their recognition of him. These were the memorials to excite their gratitude. These, too, were the tokens of his condescension; for a man does not show his wounds to any but to those whom he loves; "He showed unto them his hands and his side." You cannot see that sight, brethren, but you can meditate upon it. Think how he gave those blessed hands to the nails, and that precious side to the soldier's spear; and, as you think of them, let your love flow forth unto him who suffered thus for you.

**20.** *Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*

I should think they were glad. They had been afraid of the Jews; but they forgot that fear when they saw the Lord. I suppose that, at first, when he suddenly appeared in their midst, they were afraid of him; but now there was first a sacred calm, and then there was a ripple of holy gladness on the surface of the still waters of their souls. We cannot see him, brethren, with these eyes of ours; but by faith we can behold him, so we may have gladness even as the disciples had. We ought to be the gladdest people in all the world, because Christ is ours, and is spiritually with us as he promised that he would be.

**21.** *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

"You are to go forth and to bless the world, even as I have done. My Father hath sent me; and 'even so send I you.' You are to be my delegates, to carry on my service; my commissioned officers, to go forth to conflict and to conquest in my name."

**22, 23.** *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit,*

*they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

This is as much as for Christ to say, "I will back up your ministry. When you preach that men are condemned for sin of which they have not repented, I will make it to be so as a matter of fact. When you declare pardon to all who trust in my precious blood, I will make it so. That truth, which you preach, shall have my seal of approval set upon it. My power shall go forth with your proclamation of the truth, so that it shall be seen that you are not proclaiming a fiction. When you preach my gospel, I will remit the sins of all who believe it; and when you pronounce sentence of condemnation on such as remain in unbelief, I will confirm your declaration!"

**24.** *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came."*

Very likely, loving Jesus, as he evidently did, very much, Thomas was broken-hearted when he found that his Master was dead; so, when his fellow-disciples told him that Jesus was alive again, he could not believe it, he felt that the news was too good to be true. He had fallen into a fit of despondency, and got away, as broken-hearted, depressed people often do, trying to get quite alone, when Christian company would be one of the best ways of finding comfort and solace. So, "Thomas was not with them when Jesus came."

**25.** *The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.*

"We have seen the Lord; there is no mistake about the matter, for we have all seen him." And thus, with loving, anxious desire, they tried to cheer him, and to make him participate in the gladness which they themselves had enjoyed. Dear friends, always look after your weak brethren. If there is a Thomas, who is depressed and sad, and who therefore shuns you, do not you shun him; but find him out, and try to tell him what you have learned by way of comfort for your own heart. Mayhap, God will use it to comfort him also.

**25.** *But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

Thomas should not have said that, because, after all, it was not true. I do not suppose that he did put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into Christ's side, yet he did believe. We sometimes say a great deal that would have been far better left unsaid; and, especially, when our spirit is depressed, it is a token of wisdom to feel, "We are hardly in a condition of mind in which we can speak as we ought, so we had better remain silent."

**26.** *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them:*

That is better. His love brought him out, you see, away from himself; and it often happens that, by getting a man away from himself, we get him away from his worst enemy.

**26.** *Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.*

His first salutation, after his resurrection, was such a choice one that there could not be a better, so he repeated it when he appeared the second time. Peace is so rich a blessing that even the Divine Master can say nothing sweeter to his faithful followers; so again he says to them, "Peace be unto you."

**27.** *Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.*

Our dear and condescending Master would give to his feeble, and somewhat petulant disciple, all the proofs he had himself asked to have. He shall have evidence clear as noonday if he must have it; Thomas, however, as I suppose, was wise enough not to accept the gracious offer of his Lord. Sometimes, it is wise not to take what God himself may put in our way. You remember how Balaam was allowed to go with the men sent to him by Balak, and he did so; yet it would have been much wiser of him if he had not gone. I do not think that Thomas did put his finger into the print of the nails, or thrust his hand into his Master's side. On the contrary, we read: —

**28.** *And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*

Leaping out of the slough of doubt, on to the rock of confidence, by a single spring, and getting further, perhaps, than others had done who had before outstripped him. He inferred the Deity of Christ from his wounds and his resurrection, — a grand chain of argument

of which we have not the intervening links. His thoughtful mind made him feel that, if Christ was indeed risen, — the same Christ who had died, — it was proved, by those death-wounds, that he was both Lord and God; while his personal, appropriating faith, realizing the identity of the Saviour's person, made him say, "My Lord and my God."

*29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed:*

That is well.

*29. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

That is better.

**30, 31.** *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

Now, dear friends, has the purpose, for which this Book was written, been answered in your case? Have you been led to "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and so to believe that you "have life through his name"? If not, why not? May you have grace to answer that question, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

## **JOHN 21**

*1. After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself.*

Jesus loved to show himself to his people. Of old, his delights were with the sons of men; so, now that he had risen from the dead, he was not ashamed to visit his brethren, and he did not disdain to make himself known to them, and he will still show himself to us after a spiritual fashion, if we sincerely desire to see him.

*2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.*

As John was the writer of this record, he did not put his own name there, but merely mentioned "the sons of Zebedee."

*3. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.*

Men who are in a right state of heart cannot willingly be idle; so, if these apostles cannot preach for a time, they will go back to their old employment, and seek to catch fish.

*3. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.*

Brethren, without Christ's presence, that is what always happens: "they caught nothing." But notice what the next verse says:

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*4. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*

We must remember that a great change had taken place in him, and that the disciples were at some distance from the shore. They saw a person standing there, but they were not sure who it was.

*5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?*

This is not an exact translation of our Saviour's words; he might too readily have revealed his identity if he had spoken like that. His question was more like a common fisherman's salutation, "Lads, have you any food?"

*5. They answered him, No.*

Jesus likes us to admit that we do not possess anything of our own before he gives us the blessing he is waiting to bestow. He lets us see that the table is bare before he loads it with his bounty, so that he may have all the praise and glory for what he gives us.

*6. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*

This is another proof of the difference between Christ's presence and Christ's absence.

*7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved (again John does not mention his own name,) saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.*

"It is only he who could spy out the fish, and only he who could fill the net with them; it is just his way of acting, 'It is the Lord.'" The eyes of true love are very quick. Peter was not the first to recognize Jesus; John was, for he loved him most.

*7. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.*

He had such reverence for his Master that he would not appear before him without a sufficient covering, yet he was in a hurry to get to him. Peter always was in a hurry; yet he was grandly impetuous as a rule. I wish that some “slow-coaches” had a little of his pace.

**8, 9.** *And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.*

How that fire must have reminded Peter of his denial of his Lord! He saw his Master by the light of the charcoal fire, and that is how he saw him on the night when he denied him.

**10, 11.** *Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.*

On the previous occasion when Peter’s net was miraculously filled by Christ, we read that the net brake. That was Peter’s own net, but this time I suppose it was not Peter’s, but one that he had borrowed, and probably he had no time to mend it, so the Master took care that it should not break.

He always has his own ways of working, and they always fit the circumstances of the case, and show his thoughtful care of his people.

**12.** *Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.*

The Revised Version is more correct: “Come and break your fast,” — “Come and have your breakfast.”

**12-15.** *And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, —*

When they had broken their fast, — but not until then, for Christ does not talk to men when their hunger might make them inattentive, —

**15.** *Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?*

He had talked as if he did: “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.”

**15.** *He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.*

He was wise in not measuring his love in comparison with that of his fellow-disciples, or in speaking of the quantity of it, but he affirmed that even Christ knew that he did really love him.

**15-17.** *He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?*

Here is a lesson for all who would be pastors of Christ’s flock. The first necessity of a true pastor is love to Christ, the second necessity of a true pastor is love to Christ, and the third necessity of a true pastor is love to Christ. A man who does not love the great Shepherd cannot properly feed either his sheep or lambs. If his own heart is not right towards the divine Owner of the sheep, he cannot be a true under-shepherd to Christ’s flock.

**17-19.** *Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.*

Peter was to stretch out his hands, and be nailed to a cross, as his Lord was.

**19.** *And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.*

“That is to be your rule, whether you feed my sheep or lambs, or whether you stretch out your hands upon a cross, and die as a martyr, — ‘Follow me.’” That is also the rule for all of us who love the Lord. O Lord, help us to obey it!

**20-25.** Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, *which is he that betrayeth thee?* Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, *If I*

*will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things. and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.*

## **JOHN 21**

**1.** *After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.*

May every one of you, my fellow-disciples, realize that Jesus is showing himself to you! He is only to be seen in his own light; he must show himself to us, or else we shall never see him.

**2.** *There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.*

He had told them to go into Galilee, and given them the promise, "There shall ye see me." So now they were by the Galilean lake they were keeping their tryst with Christ, and as he always keeps his tryst with his people, he was there to meet them, as he had promised.

**3.** *Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.*

Their Master had told them to wait, but they could not wait. Surely when they were in Galilee by his command, they might have trusted him to supply their needs; but their faith was slack, so Peter said, "I go a fishing," and the others were much of the same mind; waiting had become weary work, as it often does with our faint hearts, so they said, "We also go with thee."

**3.** *They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.*

As is generally the case with us in our will-work and will-worship When we are not guided of God, but go entirely according to our own mind and will it will be thus with us also. Men attempt some business speculation without asking guidance of God, and

they make a miserable failure of it, so that it might be written of them as of the disciples, "That night they caught nothing."

*4. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*

They were thinking of fishing, so they saw boats, and nets, and the sea; if they had been thinking of Jesus, they would have looked for him, and when he came, they would have known him.

*5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?*  
"Have ye anything to eat?"

*5. They answered him, No.*  
But that was not his fault.

*6. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*

He testified his presence by crowning their exertions with his blessing, and soon they had a great catch of great fishes, — a great contrast to their night of fruitless toil.

*7, 8. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.*

We often come very slowly to Christ because we will drag that net with fishes; we have such a deal of care, anxiety, and trouble, when we need not have any at all, and so we come slowly, "dragging the net with fishes."

*9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.*

Why did they want to go fishing on their own account? Christ had all that they needed ready for them, there was the fire, and there were the fish cooking on it ready for their breakfast. It was the Lord Jesus Christ's business to provide for them, and he did so.

*10, 11. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.*

And there lay those hundred and fifty and three big fishes on the beach. Christ had no need of them but perhaps he condescended to use some of them for that morning meal, as he said to Peter, "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught."

**12.** *Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.*

Or, "Come and break your fast after your long night's toil." How they must have opened their eyes to see the fish ready cooked for them to eat!

**12.** *And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.*

"It was the Lord," — "the Lord" who had asked them if they had any food, "the Lord" who had filled the net which had previously been empty, "the Lord" who had given them his own fish from his own fire, that they might have breakfast with him. O good Master, if we have been toiling all the week, and have caught nothing, call us now to come and eat of that which thou hast thyself prepared!

**13-15.** *Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?*

"More than this lot of fish, these boats, these nets? You gave them all up for me once, but now you have taken to them again; do you really love me better than your fishing and your fish?"

**15.** *He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*

"Feed My Lambs: A Sabbath-school Sermon." "Do not go after fish any more, but attend to my business: 'feed my lambs.' The proof of your greater love to me than to all worldly things will be found in your doing of the work which I have committed to your charge."

**16.** *He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

"Quit the sea; I am giving you no more business there: come now, and be a pastor to my blood-bought sheep."

**17.** *He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.*

Thrice he had denied his Lord, so thrice he must be questioned concerning his love to the Lord whom he said he did not even know, and then for the third time he was re-commissioned by his Lord: —

**17-19.** *Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou willest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And When he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.*

Peter's death was to glorify God, so he might well be content, painful though it was to be.

**20, 21.** *Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, lord, and what shall this man do?*

Our Lord never answered such a foolish, inquisitive question as this, and therefore —

**22.** *Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*

That is how Christ would answer any similar questions that we might put to him. We need not concern ourselves so much about what is to happen to others until we have made our own calling and election sure. "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

**23.** *Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?*

This is only one of many instances in which Christ's words have been twisted and made to mean something quite different from what he intended.

**24, 25.** *This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be*

*written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.*

## **JOHN 21**

**1-3.** *After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee. and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.*

They could not do better. Idleness is the most injurious condition in which a man can be found. A preacher is much better occupied fishing than doing nothing.

**3.** *They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.*

Even apostles may fish and catch nothing. Do not be discouraged, you who, when you are endeavoring to fish for souls, for many a day catch nothing.

**4.** *But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*

Yet he was their old familiar friend. Was it their unbelief? Let us hope not. Was it that a remarkable change had passed over the Master — that, after his resurrection from the dead, there was a glory about him quite unusual, such as they had never seen before, except when they were with him on the holy mount? Perhaps so.

**5.** *Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?*

Just the kind of language you would expect from him — to call them children, and to inquire even about their temporal wants. For evermore the Lord had an eye to the temporal condition of the twelve, as well as to their spiritual. “Have ye any meat?”

**5, 6.** *They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*

Christ knows where fishes are. He knows where you are then, my friend, though you do not, perhaps, know where you are yourself. You have get out of your own latitude, mentally and spiritually. You could not describe yourself, but Christ knows every

minnow in the brook, and every fish in the lake, and knows where you are. Christ can bring fish where he wants them to be. He brought them into the net. Christ can bring souls into his net tonight. At his will, their will shall sweetly yield itself up, and they shall come into the net.

*7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,)*

He was in his undress.

*7, 8. And did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.*

It is all very well of Peter to be in such a hurry, but somebody must keep hold of the net. It is not always the most venturesome that is the most practical. We are glad to have some splendidly rash brethren, but we are equally glad that the rest are not quite so rash and are a little more prudent.

*9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon and bread.*

Christ had provided this. We are to catch fish as if we should have nothing to eat if we did not, but yet we are to depend upon him as if we never caught a fish ourselves. Do everything as if you had to do everything; trust in God as if you had to do nothing. The blending of these two will make a wise believer. "They saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread."

*10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.*

"I do not need it in order to entertain you, for I have fish here already; still, bring it." Nothing is given in vain; use it.

*11, 12. Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. And Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.*

Inwardly conscious that it was Christ's habit to speak as he had spoken. Nobody could have caught his manner, and besides, what

secret instinct enabled them to discern their meek and lowly Lord, even through the glory which surrounded him?

**13, 14.** *Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them. and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.*

Count the visits of Christ. “This is now the third time.” We ought to remember Christ’s visits to us so well and so thoroughly that we could tell how many times he has been with us. “This is now the third time.”

**15-17.** *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

Nobody can feed Christ’s sheep unless they love him, and when we love Christ the most practical way of showing it is by taking care of his lambs — his little ones — and of all those that are his — his sheep. Love will teach us how to do it. Love will sign our commission, and ordain us to the work. The Master went on to say:

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**18.** *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but when thou shall be old, thou shall stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.*

Peter, thou wilt have to be girded with an iron chain, and taken off to prison, and taken off to the cross to die.

**19.** *This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.*

That is your life business. Follow me, even though you end, as I did, on a cross. Follow me. I am a shepherd; you must be a shepherd too; and as the sheep follow you, so do you follow me.

**20, 21.** *Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?*

What about this man?

**22.** *Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.*

We ought not to be curious about the future of anybody. We must not be inquiring into what is not revealed; and what the Saviour said on this occasion was misunderstood; and if the words of Jesus, even when he spoke them, were misunderstood so as to become the foundation of a false tradition, you may judge how little value can ever be put upon tradition in the Church.

**23.** *Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?*

The Word of God is to be trusted, and not tradition, for in the handing of a message from mouth to mouth it generally varies. It sometimes loses its very essential spirit, and sometimes may be made to say the very reverse of what was said. Stick to the word, and leave the traditions alone.

**24, 25.** *This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.*

Such a full life — so pregnant with meaning — so active, and all its activity so intensely real and spiritual, that to write a life of Christ is an impossibility: and though there have been many very admirable “lives of Christ” in our time, I recommend you to keep to one which is the best of them all, and that one is written by four. The Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the best life of Christ out of sight. All others must be but mere helps to the understanding of these four.



# ACTS

## ACTS 1:1-12

*1-3. The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God:*

The resurrection of Christ, as we have often said, is the best attested of all historical facts. There is not half as much reason to be sure that Napoleon Bonaparte was ever taken to St. Helena as to believe that Jesus Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. If the resurrection of Christ is not credible, there remains nothing credible in history. I go further than that, and say that the news of yesterday, which you read in this morning's paper, you had no right to believe if you do not believe in Christ's resurrection, for the evidence in its favor is not half as strong as the evidence concerning the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Remember that this feat was attested by men who could not be deceived concerning it, and who sealed with their blood, as well as with their unfaltering testimony, their solemn belief that they had touched him, that they had spoken to him, that they had listened to him, that they had eaten with him, and had seen him eat of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb after he rose from the grave. We know that Christ has risen from the dead. That is one of the great corner stones of the Christian faith. Fall back on that in every time of doubt, and your fears will speedily disappear.

*4-6. And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they*

*asked of him, saying, LORD, will thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel.*

They had not got rid of their old ideas concerning a kingdom visible among men, they still clung to the idea of a temporal kingdom for Israel. There were a kingdom already established by Christ; but in the sense in which they understood the word, they were sadly in error.

**7-8.** *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath nut in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and we shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

As indeed they were, for they went everywhere testifying to what they had seen and heard, and very many were the conversions that followed. We want the same power to rest upon us now that rested upon them when the Holy Spirit came upon them.

**9-10.** *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;*

Luke wrote before concerning the two men, in shining garments, who said to the women at the sepulcher, “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen.” These two men in white apparel now ask an equally appropriate question: “Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?”

**11-12.** *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven, this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olives which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.*

This exposition consisted of readings from LUKE 24:49-53; AND ACTS 1:1-12.

## **ACTS 2**

**1.** *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

The first lesson that we ought to learn from this inspired record of what happened on the day of Pentecost is, that we cannot expect a revival until there, is unity among Christians. The Spirit of God will not visit and bless a church where there is strife. These disciples in Jerusalem “were all with one accord in one place” “in prayer and supplication,” as the fourteenth verse of the previous chapter tells us.

**2-6.** *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it felled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together,—*

It was a great cause for surprise that men should be able to speak in foreign tongues without any previous instruction. The sound was heard outside the upper room where they were gathered, many pressed to the door to listen, and then went away to tell the strange news, and thus “the multitude came together,”—

**6, 7.** *And were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?*

“These men are Jews, and they come from a country district where the people are more than ordinarily illiterate. It is strange that they should be able to speak in foreign languages.”

**8-11.** *And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*

“I think you, good sir, come from Parthia?” “I do, and I am astonished to hear these Jews speak the Parthian tongue.” “And you, sir?” “I am from Media, and I am amazed to hear them speak the

language of the Medes; 'tis strange, 'tis passing strange. We hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"

**12, 13.** *And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking, said, These men are full of new wine.*

They heard languages which they did not understand as well as those they did understand; so, putting the worst possible construction upon the wondrous scene, they said that the speakers were drunk. It is the mark of a wicked mind when we are ready to attribute evil reasons in the lack of any other. Let us never do this, but always be ready to believe all the good about men that we can.

**14, 15.** *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.*

"It is but nine o'clock in the morning; you cannot really imagine that these men are drunk." We might have thought it hardly worth while to take notice of such an observation; but Peter knew how to conciliate the crowd, and to meet them upon their own ground. He began where they left off, but he went on to say what they little expected to hear:—

**16-21.** *But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy, and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Peter was speaking to a Jewish audience, so he began by quoting from the Old Testament. He was wise to win their attention by a long passage out, of one of their own prophets. Now he comes nearer to his main point:—

**22, 23.** *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*

How boldly he puts the truth before his hearers! He charges home the murder of Christ upon them, yet he skillfully softens it by that introduction about “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” This is a very wonderful verse, because it shows us that everything is predetermined and foreknown by God; and yet when men do wickedly, they are responsible for it. “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” There is no man in this world who knows where these two great truths of man’s free agency and divine predestination meet. There have been all sorts of schemes and inventions to make the two doctrines agree; and one set of men has denied one of the truths, and another set has denied the other; but do you nothing of the kind. Believe them both, yet do not pretend that you can reconcile them. It may be that, in another state, with larger capacity of mind than we at present possess, we shall be able to reconcile these two truths. I am not sure that we shall do so; and I do not know that even angels can understand this great mystery; but it is a grand thing to exercise faith where we cannot comprehend what is revealed to us. He who only believes what he can understand will have a very short creed, and soon he will have none at all; but he who believes what he cannot understand, simply because it is taught him by revelation from God, is the man who walks humbly with his God, and he shall be accepted. I thank God for the mystery that conceals so much from us; where would there be room for faith if all things were as plain as A B C?

**24-28.** *When God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul*

*in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.*

Note how Peter keeps to the Old Testament. Those quotations added force to his argument, for his hearers believed the ancient Scriptures to be the very voice of God, and therefore he gave them much of it. Having quoted from the Psalms, Peter goes on to make this comment upon David's words:—

**29-32.** *Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

Standing up with the eleven apostles, and with the greater company of disciples behind them, it was a noble utterance of Peter: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

**33.** *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

"This, which is a mystery to you, is the result of Christ's exaltation at the right hand of his Father."

**34-36.** *For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

There does not seem very much that is original or striking in that sermon; certainly, it is not a very sensational one; there is no fine metaphor in it; no garnishing of poetry; but, in plain, simple language, Peter proves that it is Jesus Christ of whom David spoke in the Psalms. This was exactly what the people wanted to have proved; many of them were ready to receive such proof as that, and they did receive it.

**37-40.** *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

That is to say, “Come out from among the ungodly; leave the world behind, and escape for your lives.”

**41-47.** *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

Oh, that we might have the same blessed experience! God grant it, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

## **ACTS 2:1-21**

**1-8.** *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and*

*were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*

These men, so far from being able to speak many languages, could not by themselves speak even one correctly. The Galilaeen dialect was a base degradation of the true Jewish tongue, so that the Galilaeans were always the subject of sneers and scoffings on account of their mispronunciation. There are several stories in the old Rabbinical writings, all intended to ridicule the Galilaeans; yet these men had now been taught to speak their own language perfectly; and, what was more marvellous still, languages that they had never heard now came pouring forth from their lips with the greatest fluency. How wide the range of those foreign tongues was, we learn from the following verses: —

**9-11.** *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts in Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*

Babel's curse was now removed, — not by a reversing of God's curse, for God's curses and blessings are both like the laws of the Medes and Persians which never can be altered; men still spoke the tongues of confusion, but the apostles were able to speak to them all after receiving that miraculous gift of tongues. Thus was fulfilled that promise of Jesus, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto my Father;" for Christ never spoke with many tongues, nor did he enable his disciples to do so during his life on earth, but when he had gone back to heaven to his Father, and had received gifts for men, they were enabled to do greater works than he had accomplished by his personal ministry here below.

**12,13.** *And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

That is to say, if a Libyan, for instance, had been listening to one who was preaching in the language of Cappadocia, he might think

that the man was merely babbling strange sounds without any meaning in them. To others, the inspired speech of the apostles was only like the incoherent utterance of drunken men.

**14-20.** *But Peter, standing up with the eleven lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:*

Doubtless this refers first to the siege of Jerusalem, when those strange portents were seen in the heavens, and afterwards to that far greater and more notable day of the Lord, the day of judgment, when the moon shall become as blood, and the sun shall become black as sackcloth of hair.

**21.** *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

What a glorious gospel verse this is! This is one of the great lifeboat texts of the Bible. He who can get into this boat shall certainly sail to glory in safety. “Whosoever” — there is no exception of character; whatsoever his past life may have been, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord” — here are no hard conditions; — prayer, trust, confession of that trust, — all these make up calling upon the name of the Lord; and whosoever shall do this not only may be, but “shall be saved.” There is no perhaps, no peradventure about it: “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

## ACTS 2:1-42

We cannot too often read the story of that wondrous outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and let us never read it without asking the Lord to manifest in our midst the fullness of the Spirit's power. We may not have a repetition of the miraculous gifts which were then bestowed upon the apostles and those who were with them; but we may have that gracious influence which shall convince and convert those who gather to hear the Word. Our success in preaching the Word is entirely dependent upon the presence and working of the Holy Spirit; therefore, let our prayer be,!

“Lord God, the Holy Ghost,  
In this accepted hour,  
As on the day of Pentecost,  
Descend in all thy power.

“The young, the old inspire With wisdom from above;  
And give us hearts and tongues of fire,  
To pray, and praise, and love.”

**1-13.** *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying*

*one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

The people who came together were greatly astonished to find the disciples of Christ speaking to them in their own tongues. Though all the speakers were Jews, and naturally knew no tongue but their own, yet they were able to talk in divers languages. Therefore some of their hearers, mocking, said, "These men are full of new wine."

**14-21.** *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

I did not detain you to speak about the moon turned into blood, or the sun darkened into midnight; those matters are of small consequence to you and to me compared with this sentence: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." What a blessed door of hope is this! What a window, letting the light of heaven shine into the darkest despondency! Whosoever shall address himself to God by repentance, by faith, by prayer, shall be saved.

**22, 23.** *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*

This was bold talking, for Peter was doubtless addressing many of the very people who had put the Lord to death, and he charges them with it. Observe how he declares that Christ's death was in accordance with "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," yet he expressly says that "by wicked hands" they had crucified and slain him. It never occurred to Peter that the counsel of God deprived men of the responsibility and guilt of their actions. No neither need it ever occur to you. If anyone shall say to you, "When anything is according to the foreknowledge and counsel of God, how can God blame the doer of it?" you may tell him that he has first to explain to you what he means; and if he says there is a difficulty in it, ask him to tell you what the difficulty is. Those who knew better than the objector, could see none. The inspired apostle Peter could see none; but when he was most vehement in charging these men with guilt, yet, at the same time, he said that it was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Surely, he was a bad pleader to introduce into his argument anything that could be readily construed into an excuse for those he was accusing. But there is no real excuse in it; the free agency of man is as true as the predestination of God; the two truths stand fast for ever. It is the folly of man to imagine that they disagree. If you do wrong, you are accountable for the wrong; and if there is a providence which ordains everything, — as certainly there is, — yet that providence takes not away from any man the full responsibility for aught that he doeth. So, truly did Peter say to these Jews concerning Christ, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

**24-32.** *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a*

*prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in the abode of the dead, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

Here Peter appealed to the eleven, and to all the disciples then present who had seen Jesus after he had risen from the dead. It must have been a very impressive sight as they all stood up bearing witness that they had seen the Christ, who was crucified, alive after his death. It was a wonderful public attestation to that grandest of all facts, the raising again from the dead of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.

**33.** *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

Was not that enough to convince them? They saw and they heard the proofs of the working of the Spirit among them, and Peter told them that “this” was the gift of Christ, who had ascended up on high. It must have been a very striking thing, to have been there, and to have heard and seen these tokens of God setting his seal to the work of Jesus.

**34-36.** *For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

What a climax to Peter’s sermon! How simple and yet how triumphant is the argument! We do not wonder that men were convinced by it.

**37.** *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, —*

There is a great distinction between being cut to the heart and being pricked in the heart. Those who were cut to the heart stoned the preacher; but they who are pricked in the heart yield a sweet obedience to the will of God: “They were pricked in their heart,” —

**37-40.** *And said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and*

*be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

Not, “save yourselves”; but “save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Come out from among them. They are guilty of the death of Christ; you will be found guilty of it, too, unless you now disown the people who committed that awful crime. Come right out from among them, and be altogether separated from them.

**41, 42.** *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

### **ACTS 2:14-43**

**14.** *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you and hearken to my words:*

A great crowd had gathered in the street, and the apostles, under divine inspiration, addressed them in different tongues, Peter as the leader coming prominently to the front: “Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice.” They were twelve witnesses of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, for they had seen him after he had risen, and had eaten with him; they constituted a jury of twelve honest and true men, and Peter as their foreman, “standing up with the eleven,” gave their verdict!

**15.** *For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.*

At nine o'clock in the morning, it was not to be supposed that they had become drunken.

**16-18.** *But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men*

*shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall/prophesy:*

Every member of the Christian community should be anointed by the Holy Spirit. The blessing would not simply be given to one here and another there, but there would be a wonderful outpouring that should fall upon the whole multitude of believers.

**19-21.** *And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

This is a wonderful connection in which to find such a promise as this, ! a darkened sun, a blood-red moon,! yet “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” When the worst comes to the worst, prayer will still be heard, and faith will lead to salvation! O matchless grace of God! Is there not someone here who will call upon God’s name now before that evil day comes in all its fullness? “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Oh, that every one of you would lay hold of that promise! It is said that drowning men will catch at a straw. This is no straw, but a gloriously strong lifebuoy; only get into it, and it will float you to glory.

**22.** *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:*

Note that Peter does not begin with the Deity of Christ. He will get to that soon; but, like a wise speaker, he commences with points upon which they were all agreed, or which they could not deny. He therefore calls Christ “a man approved of God,” and he reminds them of the “miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him” in their midst. They knew that God had thus attested his mission, so he appealed to them for confirmation: “As ye yourselves also know.”

**23.** *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*

There is a wonderful blending, in this verse, of the predestination of God and yet the responsibility of man. I suppose our finite faculties cannot yet discern where these two things meet; but faith, in the absence of every other power, believes them both. The predestination of God does not alter the moral quality of the acts of wicked men. Man acts freely, as freely as if there were no divine predestination; yet the free agency of man does not affect the foreknowledge and predestination of God.

**24.** *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should he holden of it.*

It was possible for him to die, but it was not possible for him to be held in the bonds of death.

**25.** *For David!*

Speaking of Christ in the Psalm which, at first sight, might seem to refer to David himself, but which was even by the Rabbis believed also to refer to the Messiah, and which we know did indeed refer to the Messiah.

**20-27.** *Speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did any heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, —*

Hades, the world of separate spirits, —

**27.** *Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

David was speaking of someone who, though he should die, would never in his body feel the natural effect of death, namely decay.

**28, 29.** *Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day.*

Peter craves liberty to speak with freedom, and then he very shrewdly gives to David the high title of patriarch, which is not generally given to him, so as to win their attention and approval: “Let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day,” and

therefore he did not speak about himself in the words Peter was quoting.

**30-32.** *Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

Peter points to the eleven around him, there they stood, steadfast in the midst of the surging crowd, assenting to the bold declaration of their leader.

**33-35.** *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool.*

See how he builds up his argument with clear and cogent reasoning.

**36.** *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

How those men must have started when he came to that which was the finale of his address, the point at which he had aimed all along!

**37.** *Now when they heard this, they were picked in their heart, —*

The pointed truth had gone home to their heart, and they were wounded by it.

**37.** *And said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

These may have been the same people who mockingly said, "These men are full of new wine." They began badly, but they ended well. I hope none of you have come here to mock; but if you had done so, and then went out pricked in your heart by the truth you had heard, it would be better than coming in an attentive frame of mind, and then going out unimpressed as so many do. God prevent it!

**38.** *Then Peter said unto them, Repent,!*

Change your mind entirely, be sorry for what you have done, repudiate what you have done by a holy repentance of it: ‘Repent,’

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**38.** *And be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,*

Peter urged them to repent, and bade them confess their faith by being baptized in God’s appointed way.

**38.** *And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

“You shall be sharers in this wonderful manifestation which has so astounded you.”

**39.** *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

What promise did Peter mean? Why that promise in the 21<sup>st</sup> verse, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” That promise is also given to you, my hearers, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even in the most distant heathen land, for the “whosoever” in the promise applies to every one who “shall call on the name of the Lord.” Do not therefore shut yourselves out, or try to shut others out, but believe the promise, call upon God, and you shall be saved.

**40.** *And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

Peter first bore witness to the truth, and then pleaded with his hearers to receive his testimony. All true ministers will both “testify and exhort.” Some are always exhorting; they cry, “Believe, believe,” but they do not tell their hearers what is to be believed. Others are always testifying; they preach good doctrine, but they do not like to exhort sinners to repent, and believe the gospel. Each of these is a one-legged ministry, but we must have two legs to our ministry, and, like Peter, “testify and exhort saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” “Come out from those who crucified Christ, quit the generation that is guilty of the blood of the Son of God, put your repentance between you and them, put your public baptism between you and them, avow that you belong not to them, but to him whom they crucified, and whom God hath exalted.”

*41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

They not only believed what he said, but they were glad to believe it; acknowledging that they had greatly sinned, they rejoiced that there was a promise which covered even their sin: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Then, having repented and believed, they were baptized upon profession of their faith, according to the true Scriptural order.

*42. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

They believed the doctrine that was taught by the apostles, and they had fellowship with them and with all other Christians with whom they were associated. They did not try to go to heaven by some underground railway without confessing Christ; but, having confessed their faith in Christ they further manifested their devotion to him "in breaking of bread, and in prayers." I do not know how many prayer-meetings they had, they must have kept on praying, and praising, and preaching pretty well all day long.

*43. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.*

### **ACTS 2:36-47**

You know that Peter had been preaching a plain, simple, straightforward sermon upon the death, crucifixion, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He, who was once such a coward that he trembled before a little maid, now that he is filled with the Spirit, boldly charges this crowd with being murderers and decides because their kind put to death the Lord of life and glory. If you turn to the 36<sup>th</sup> verse, you will see the effect of Peter's plain preaching through the power of the Holy Spirit: —

*36, 37. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart,*

A little later in this same Book, we read of those who listened to Stephen's sharp, sword-like sentences, "When they heard these

things, they were cut to the heart,” and soon they stoned Stephen to death. To be “cut to the heart” is not enough, but to be pricked in the heart is to receive a mortal wound. Happy is the man who has had his sin killed through having received a deadly wound from the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. These people who heard Peter preach “were pricked in their heart, “and, first, they were in doubt as to what they should do but, secondly, they were resolved that, whatever they should be told to do they would do at once.

**37, 38.** *And said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Nobody but a Baptist minister could have preached that sermon, at least, we shall have to wait a long while before we hear any other saying to a whole congregation, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you.” This is indeed the full proclamation of the gospel, and we have no more right to leave out the baptism than we have to leave out the repentance. “Repent, and be baptized every one of you.” Peter was not like those hyper-Calvinists who are afraid to give an exhortation to a sinner because he is spiritually dead, but he spoke out boldly to those who had asked “What shall we do?” and said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”

**39.** *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

This is a most blessed verse. The promise is to us, and to our descendants; not merely to our children, but also to our grandchildren, ay, and to our race as far as it yet may run; and the next clause, “and to all that are afar off” proves that the promise is made to the far-off ones as well as to our children, with only this limitation, “even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

**40.** *And with many other works did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

Not, “save yourselves from hell;” that Christ alone can do for you, but “save yourselves from this generation” by coming boldly out from among the ungodly, taking upon you the distinctive mark

of the Christian, and so separating yourselves from those upon whom the sentence of death shall fall.

*41-45. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*

What a notable instance this was of the power of divine grace! We should not usually suppose that the Jewish race would be given to any excess of making common property; but where grace came in the first flush of its dawn, see to what prodigies of liberality it excited the early believers.

Would that we had more of this generous spirit nowadays!

*46. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,*

I believe that wherever two or three disciples of Christ meet together it is competent for them to celebrate the Lord's supper. That ordinance is not, as some think it to be a church ordinance, to be confined to the official assembling of all believers; but wherever two or three are met in Christ's name, there he is; and where he is, there may the emblems of his broken body and shed blood be partaken of in memory of him.

*47. Praising God, and having favor with all his people. And the lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*

May he do the like unto all our churches, and he shall have the glory world without end! Amen.

### **ACTS 3:1-21**

**1.** *Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.*

Peter and John seem to have been linked in closest friendship. Peter had been brought back by John when he was almost despairing

after having denied his Master. John lovingly found him out, and made him his associate; and now they “went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer.” Observe, here, how very sweetly the Old Testament dispensation melts into the new. The Temple was no longer what it had been before; the type was of no further use now that the great Antitype of the Temple had come; yet these apostles still went up to it at the hour of prayer. There are some men who are great at destroying. It will be time to destroy the old when the new is quite ready; and even then, it may be very possible to let the darkness gradually melt away into a twilight, and so the day shall come with no great gap, no marked surprise. So Peter and John went up to the Temple at the same hour as others went. It is folly to be singular, except when to be singular is to be something more right than others.

**2, 3.** *And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms eye them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.*

This seems to have been the custom about the Temple gates, as it is about the doors of many churches on the Continent. For instance, you could not approach the door of a certain church in Rome without being solicited, perhaps, by a score of beggars. I do not suppose that it was so in Judaea in its prosperous days; but when religion does not prosper, beggars are sure to be multiplied; and now that the very spirit of godliness had gone, almsgiving was done in public, and hence the beggars appeared in public.

**4-7.** *And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give to thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

The man had never stood upon his feet in all his life, and was so unable to move that he had to be carried to the Temple gates to beg; and yet, at the mention of the great and glorious name of Jesus, his feet and ankle-bones immediately received strength.

**8-11.** *And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the*

*people saw him walking and praising God: and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.*

You are not at all surprised that he held Peter and John; it was but natural that he should follow them wherever they went, for he owed so much to them, and they were the best friends that he had ever had. He was filled with reverence for them because of what they had wrought upon him; and now, lest they should go away, he held them; and “all the people ran together unto them, greatly wondering.” He who was healed by Christ’s wonderful name was wondering, and the people who saw him healed were all wondering. I suppose that wonder mingles with all true worship. All wonder is not worship; but where there is adoration of God, and a sense of his great goodness and of our unworthiness, there seems always to be a large amount of wonder. We shall even-

“Sing with wonder and surprise,  
His lovingkindness in the skies.”

**12.** *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?*

Peter could well see that the people attributed to himself and John more than was right, so he thus had an opportunity of preaching the gospel to them, and you may be certain that he did not miss it.

**13.** *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; !*

Or, rather, as you have it in the Revised Version with more correctness, “hath glorified his Servant Jesus,” for his Son may be said to be glorified already. But Jesus had taken upon himself the form of a servant, and God had “glorified his Servant Jesus;” —

**13-15.** *Whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto*

*you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.*

I want you to note here how Peter will have it that the God of the gospel is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. I do not hesitate to say that the god of a large number of professors now is not the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; and the reason I say so is this, — that they often treat the Old Testament as if it were an altogether secondary volume, and speak about the imperfect ideas of God which the Hebrews had, and the imperfect revelation of God in the Old Testament. I believe that Jehovah — that very Jehovah who clave the Red Sea, and drowned the Egyptians, — the terrible God of the Old Testament — is the same God who is the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and we are to take the Godhead as it is revealed, not alone in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament also. There are some who would pick and choose that part of Scripture which they like best, and construct a god for themselves out of those chosen texts. These be they who have other gods before Jehovah; and these be they who make unto themselves an image which, if it be not graven upon stone, is yet made out of their own imaginations, which they set up, and worship in the place of the one living and true God. “The God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied.” See how plain-spoken Peter is, — how boldly he presses home upon the crowd around him the murder of Christ, — the rejection of the Messiah! It took no small amount of courage and faith to speak like that, and to speak so to persons who were full of admiration of him before, and who would be pretty sure to be filled with indignation against him directly. A man can speak boldly against those who are his enemies; but, when people begin to flatter you, and admire you, a softness steals over the bravest heart, and he is inclined to be very gentle. I admire Peter that he puts it thus plainly: “Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.”

**16.** *And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: —*

“You see him now, and you know what he used to be; there is no question about the identity of the man.”

**16, 17.** *Yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, —*

How like his Master does Peter now speak! Instead of drawing his sword, as he did when he cut off the ear of Malchus, he puts the truth thus mildly: “I wot that through ignorance ye did it,” —

**17-21.** *As did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*

### **ACTS 3:11-26**

You remember, dear friends, how Peter denied his Lord in the time of his trial. Now notice what a change was wrought in him after the Holy Spirit had fallen upon him on the day of Pentecost. We have often read the story of the man healed at the beautiful gate of the temple; now let us see what followed:

**11.** *And as the lame man, which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.*

It is always easy to draw a crowd, but there was really something wonderful to be seen that day. The apostle was careful to turn to the very best account the curiosity of the crowd. See how quickly he carried their thoughts away from the man before him to the greater Man, the Divine Man, the Son of God whom they had rejected.

**12-23.** *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let*

*him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.*

Hear this, then, you who have heard Christ, through his Word and through his servants, and have heard him preach,— ay, scores and hundreds of times. Let me read this text to you again; and as I read it, may it sink into your hearts. “It shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”

**24-26.** *Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*

They were to have the first proclamation of the gospel; from among them would be gathered many of the first converts. The preacher did not know immediately what result this sermon produced; it was not like the sermon preached at Pentecost, for he did know what happens after its delivery. This is quite as good a

sermon every way, and we have every reason to believe that as many were converted by it. The Spirit of God was with Peter; yet even the Spirit of God, does not always work in the same way upon men. You see, the apostles had no opportunity to have a talk with the people afterwards, and to find out what had been done, as they had on the day of Pentecost.

This exposition consisted of readings from ACTS 3:11-26; ACTS 4:1-4; AND 2 PETER 3

### **ACTS 4:1-4**

*1-4. And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.*

So that, though they could not tell there and then how many were converted, and though they could not baptize them at once, for they were taken away, yet, though there was no after-meeting, there were probably just as many saved as at Pentecost. Just as grand a result came of it. You cannot judge of the result of a sermon on the particular day that it is preached; it may seem as if that sermon had produced no effect, and it may be so; but, still, this time it was not so. Whenever you go home sad that you have not had an after-meeting, or you are interrupted, and cannot tell what good was done, though you do not know what has been accomplished, the record is in heaven, and God will reveal it by-and-by; and, peradventure, even here you will discover that you made a mistake, and that the service which seemed lost was one of the most blessed that you ever conducted. God grant that it may be so, for Christ's sake! Now let us read Peter's second Epistle, the third chapter.

This exposition consisted of readings from ACTS 3:11-26; ACTS 4:1-4; AND 2 PETER 3

### ACTS 4:8-33

Peter and John were summoned before the priests to give an account for having healed the lame man, and for having preached in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. In the eighth verse we read: —

**8-12.** *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole: Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Nothing can exceed the directness, the comprehensiveness, and the boldness of this statement. He not only declares the name of Christ to be the wonder-working name, but he charges them with his murder, re-asserts the resurrection; nay, further, he cuts at the root of all their ceremonial righteousness, and declares that they must be saved by this hated and despised name, or else perish fore ever. Under all circumstances, let the servant of God behave himself boldly. Let him remember that this is hour he ought always to speak, and that when the honour of his Master and the welfare of souls are concerned, it is not for him to withhold, but to speak out the truth.

**13.** *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*

Where else could such holy courage have been learned? They spake in their measure just as the great Master did, of whom it is written: "He spoke as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." They did not speak with the timid, hesitating manner of a preacher who seems to hold the balance of probabilities between the right and the wrong, the false and the true, but with the demonstration of a hearty conviction of the truth of the principles which they uttered. So Christ spoke, and, having learned of him, so spake his disciples.

**14.** *And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.*

Converts shut the mouths of adversaries. The good done by the gospel will always be a dumbfounding argument to the ungodly.

**16-20.** *But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem: and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*

Like the vessel full of new wine, which must have vent or burst, so is the man who is filled with the knowledge of Jesus. He must speak. He must: —

“Tell to others round

What a dear Saviour he has found.”

It is no matter of choice with him, for, as Paul says, “Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.” As the old prophet hath it, “The word of the Lord was as fire in my bones,” and if it be the true word of God, it will soon burn its way out.

**21-22.** *So when they had farther threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.*

Therefore, it was the more remarkable, forty years lame and yet healed! But how great is the grace displayed in the salvation of an aged sinner — forty years dead in trespasses and in sins — fifty, sixty seventy, or even eighty years, a faithful servant of the black tyrant and yet made to follow the new and better Master! What a triumph of grace is that which snatches the sere brand out of the burning when it is so fitted for the fire!

**23.** *And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.*

You can always tell a man by his company, Had these people been ungodly, they would have done as the ungodly do when they come out of prison: they would have gone off to their old pot-

companions. But they are believers, and they go to their own company.

**24-28.** *And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determine before to be done.*

How strangely this doctrine of predestination comes in just there! They are singing of the wickedness of men, and the triumph which God gets over it, and so this in the very sum and substance of the song, that when wicked men think that God's decrees will be forever put away by the destruction of his Son, they themselves are then actually doing what God had "determined before to be done." The wildest discord makes harmony in the ear of God. Man may be in rebellion against the Most High, but he is still abjectly the slave of God's predestination, and let man sin with his free will, even to the very extremest length of folly, yet even then God hath a bit in his mouth and a bridle upon his jaws, and knows how to rule and govern him according to his own good pleasure. The ferocity of kings and priests doth but fulfill the counsel of God.

**29-33.** *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word. By stretching forth thine hand to heal: and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of the holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*

## ACTS 7:14-43

**14-17.** *Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulcher that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem. But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,*

Note those words, “the time of the promise,” and remember that every promise has its due time of fulfillment, and that there is a time of promise, to all the Lord’s chosen people, when he will surely bring them out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

**18-20.** *Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our father, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father’s house three months:*

In the darkest night of Israel’s bondage in Egypt, her star of hope arose: “Moses was born, and was exceeding fair;” or, as the margin has it, “was fair to God,” ! with a beauty something more than human.

**21, 22,** *And when he was cast out, Pharaoh’s daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.*

He was well qualified for the work to which God had called him, but how much more fully qualified is that great Prophet, like unto Hoses, whom God has raised up, in these latter days, for the salvation of men, even Jesus Christ his Son! He knows more than all the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians, he knows more than the cleverness of the devil, so he can deliver us from all his crafty wiles.

**23-25.** *And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: for he supposed his brethren*

would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.

Alas! it is just the same with Israel now. The Lord Jesus came to his own, and, according to one of his parables, the Father said of him, "They will reverence my Son;" but they did nothing of the kind; they said, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." And, alas! how many, nowadays, are imitating their evil example! They say, "We will not have this man to reign over us;" they refuse to yield themselves to the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**26-30.** *And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust ham away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday! Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a game of fire in a bush.*

So that he was eighty years of age when he really began his great lifework. Perhaps, as a rule, the larger part of our time is occupied in getting ready to work. Yet, if we are able to perform a word as good as that which Moses did, it will well repay us for a long season of preparation.

**31-34.** *When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down, to deliver them.*

All this must have been very pleasant to the ear of Moses; it was solemn, yet it was exceedingly sweet; but notice what comes next:

**34.** *And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.*

Oh, dear! what a falling-off there seems to be in these words! God first says, "I have heard their groaning, and am come down to

deliver them;” and then he adds, “I will send thee into Egypt.” Yes, truly, from the grandeur of the divine working down to the insignificance of our instrumentality, is a tremendous stoop; yet the God who says, “I will save sinners by my grace; none but myself can save them;” also says to me, “Go thou, and preach the gospel to them.” The same Lord who says, “I will change the heart of stone into a heart of flesh, and work a miracle of mercy in renewing those who are dead in trespasses and sins,” also says to you, “Speak to the persons sitting with you in the pew, and seek to point them to the Saviour.” It is a wonderful stoop, but it is the condescension of almighty grace, and it brings great honour to the poor, trembling, unworthy person to whom the message is addressed. Moses thought himself very unfit for the task of delivering Israel, and he would, if he had dared to do so, have refrained from that task; but God said to him, “Now come, I will send thee into Egypt.” Ah, brethren! how different a man did Moses then become! When he went out by himself, without any commission, he was impatient to get to his work, and he slew an Egyptian, and so had to flee away out of the country; but when he was sent in God’s name, when the Lord said to him, “Now come, I will send thee,” then the work was accomplished. O my brethren, in your service for the Saviour, always seek for power from on high! Ask to be sent of God, and pray your Master to go with you; then will you succeed in the task which he entrusts to you.

**35.** *This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to he a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.*

Is not that a shadow of that grander truth, “The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner,”

**36, 37.** *He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord pour God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.*

Now you see that Moses was thus a type of Christ. God grant that we may not reject Christ, as the Israelites rejected Moses; but may we be willing that he should be to us our Judge and our Deliverer!

**38, 39.** *This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,*

Though Moses had brought them out of Egypt, they were not obedient to him, and they wanted to go back to the land of bondage. And, ah! brethren, this is the great crime of the present day, the crime of mankind in general, that, after all Jesus has done, there is still within so many the evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

**40, 41.** *Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of Him. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.*

This again is another of the ways by which men attempt to make an idol god out of something which they can see, and to rejoice in what they themselves do instead of trusting in what the Lord Jesus has done.

**42, 43.** *Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; is it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.*

There was still idolatry in their hearts, and Moses was rejected by them. God grant that we may not be idolaters, and so reject the Prophet, like unto Moses, whom the Lord has sent unto us! Amen!

## **ACTS 8**

Stephen had been stoned to death; but with his latest breath he prayed for his murderers. Then this chapter begins: —

**1.** *And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem,*

*and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.*

Saul, having tasted blood in the murder of Stephen, became more and more furious in his persecution of the Church of Christ at Jerusalem, and the brethren had to escape for their lives. They all did so, except the apostles, who were specially cared for by divine providence.

*2. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentations over him.*

As well they might, for his death was a serious loss to the Church. He was one of the best workers for Christ of that day; and when he was thus put to death by the judicial murder of stoning, the devout men who were spared to mourn his loss “made great lamentation over him.”

*3. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.*

At first, we can hardly believe that this was the very man who afterwards became the greatest preacher of the gospel, and the builder up of the Church of Christ, but it was even so. He was always earnest in whatever he did. When he persecuted, he did it with all his might; and when he became converted, then he preached with all his might. He was a thoroughgoing man. I like these thoroughgoing men; they are worth saving. When they are converted, they bring great glory to God. The next verse tells us one effect of the havoc wrought by Saul: —

*4. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.*

They might have stopped at Jerusalem, and made a comfortable and strong church there, if they had not been persecuted; but, being scattered abroad, they were like seed in every furrow of the field: “they went every where preaching the word.” Now, out of this church, there is a continual drain of brethren and sisters, who leave their native land to go to distant colonies; such are the exigencies of the times, that many have to go abroad. I charge you, wherever you go, carry the holy seed with you. Be yourselves a seed for Christ in every land.

**5-11.** *Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, this man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.*

And there are those in all ages who set up to be prophets, and who seek to draw men after them, of whom it is well to beware.

**12-13.** *But 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. Then Simon himself believed also:*

Simon believed after a certain style and fashion. He saw that there was a real power about Philip, which he did not himself possess, and he was obliged to bow down before the manifest presence of God.

**13-17.** *And when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

That is to say, they received a share of those miraculous gifts which attended the introduction of the gospel of Christ. It has therefore been supposed that certain superior persons should visit the churches, and lay their hands upon people. So they should, if they have the power to bestow such a gift as Peter and John gave; but to lay empty hands on the heads of men and women, is a vain ceremony. When the apostles laid their hands on these converts in Samaria, they received the Holy Ghost.

**18-26.** *And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. And they when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.*

Philip, who had been so useful to the multitude, must now be of service to a solitary individual. My dear brethren, if you can gather a crowd of people together, preach the gospel to them; but if you cannot do that, preach the gospel to one person, if you can only reach one. It was a desert, but the angel of the Lord bade Philip go there.

**27.** *And he arose and went:*

Not demurring, but at once obeying. If the Lord should send you to the wilderness, depend upon it that he will send somebody else there for you to bless; go, therefore, without fear.

**27, 28.** *And, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.*

He was a devout man, a studious man, a Bible-reading man. We do not often find such persons in great authority under queens; but here was one.

**29-31.** *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?*

*And he said, how can I accept some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.*

See how God honours the Christian ministry by making even his Word to be in some respects insufficient for some men; at any rate, they need that some living voice should come and guide them into the meaning of it. Oh, that he would bless our voice tonight, that some who have gathered with us in this Tabernacle might be brought to understand the Scriptures through our guidance!

**32-35.** *The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*

It seems that, wherever Philip went, he had but one subject. When he went down to the city of Samaria, he preached Christ to them; and now that he talks to this Ethiopian eunuch, he preaches unto him Jesus.

**36, 37.** *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

That is the great confession of faith that is to be made by all who have believed in Jesus.

**38, 39.** *And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*

The Holy Spirit will not permit us to depend too much upon men as our teachers. The Spirit of the Lord did not take away the Bible: that was left to the eunuch. He only caught away Philip after the evangelist had furnished the enquirer with the key with which he could open the Scriptures, then he could unlock the Word himself. That he did so, if history is to be believed, is very clear. He went

home to Ethiopia, perhaps to Abyssinia, and the people there heard the gospel from him, and to this day there are some traces of our holy faith in that land.

**40.** *But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.*

We know quite well what “he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea,” although it is not mentioned here. Wherever he went, he had but one theme: “the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ.” So may it be with us wherever we go.

### **ACTS 8:4-40**

**4-6.** *Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.*

We cannot tell how far the soil had been prepared for the sowing of the gospel seed by our Lord’s visit to Sychar, a city of Samaria. The influence of the converts in that place may have inclined the people of the city of Samaria to give the more heed to the preaching of Philip. The work of a great and good man may seem sometimes to die out, but its effects remain, and extend beyond the place where he laboured.

**7-11.** *For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he bewitched them with sorceries.*

He had managed to secure great influence over the people, and he held them under his wicked rule.

**12-17.** *But 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. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

So that miraculous gifts were bestowed upon them. Of course, there was already manifest among them that divine operation of the Spirit of God, by which men are converted, and brought to faith in Christ; but they had not known the special, attesting, wonder-working power of the Spirit until the apostles came amongst them. A good work was thus done, yet everything was not altogether as the apostles could have wished it to be.

**18-26.** *And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.*

He must have wondered at receiving such an order as that. To be directed to go to a city, he could understand; but to be sent to a road

which went through the desert, must have seemed strange to him; yet he obeyed his Lord's orders.

**27.** *And he arose and went:*

Always do as you are told by your Lord. The first qualification for a good servant of Jesus Christ is immediate obedience.

**27, 28.** *And, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.*

He was a devout man, who was seeking rest of heart, but he could not find it. He had joined in all the solemn services of the Jewish law, but as yet he had not discovered the great secret of eternal life. He was still searching for it; and as he rode along the rough road, he was reading the Book of the prophet Esaias.

**29, 30.** *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?*

That is the main thing; a religion that is not based upon understanding will soon come to an end. An emotional religion—one that is nothing but emotion—will be temporary and transient religion; so Philip enquired of the eunuch, “Understandest thou what thou readest?”

**31-34.** *And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?*

That was a very important question; it went to the very root of the matter. It was useless for him to read about some unknown person; he must know who it was of whom the prophet had written

**35.** *Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*

You may begin anywhere in the Bible, and preach Jesus. You may begin at the first chapter of Genesis, or at the last chapter of Malachi, at the first of Matthew or the last of Revelation, and still preach Jesus, for he is the sum and substance of the whole Scripture.

**36-40.** *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?*

And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached—

(See how he kept to his one business wherever he might be, in Samaria, on the desert pathway, or in the town of Azotus:) “He preached”—

**40.** *In all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.*

Oh, for the like earnest spirit to be in all of us who profess to be Christ’s followers, that we may preach him wherever we may be!

## **ACTS 9:1-22**

**1, 2.** *And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*

His very breath was hot with malice against the saints, he could not live without venting his spite upon the disciples of Christ. He showed this by the fact that he not only sought to arrest men, but he was equally cruel towards women, who, from their weakness, one would have thought might have been let alone but he expressly desired it to be written in the letters that, “whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.”

**3.** *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:*

When speaking before Agrippa, Paul said that it was “a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun.” Was it not that very Shekinah which of old had shone forth between the cherubim over the mercy-seat?

**4, 5.** *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

There is something very characteristic about Christ’s answer to Saul’s question. He did not say, “It is hard for me;” although he was himself persecuted in his members, and felt intense sympathy with them, he did not dwell upon that; but he said to Saul, “It is hard for thee.” There was much pity in the rebuke. Saul was like a bullock that has been pricked by the sharp ox-goad, and that kicks against it, and so is hurt all the more. Our Lord knew what sorrow it would cause Saul in the years to come, for he would never cease to lament that he had persecuted the disciples of Christ.

**6.** *And he trembling and astonished —*

Finding that Jesus, whom he thought to be dead and buried, and those followers he was so violently opposing, was yet alive, —

**6-8.** *Said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no men: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.*

So the proud persecutor, who was going to Damascus as a conqueror to crush the saints of God, was himself led into the city as a captive, to be for ever afterwards the slave of Jesus Christ.

**9.** *And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.*

What passed through that mind, which was darkened to natural light, but was being filled with spiritual light, we can well guess; I mean, those of us who have experienced true conviction of sin. In those three days, he lived over again his life of opposition to the

Lord Jesus; what heart-break he must have felt, and what anguish of soul, and what holy resolves he must have made during his three days' blindness and fasting!

**10, 11.** *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,*

He had been a praying man for most of his life, for he was a devout Jew and according to his light he had lived up to his knowledge. But now he was praying in the Christian sense of the term, drawing near to God through the very Christ whom he had in his ignorance and unbelief persecuted. How many prayers of unregenerate men, who know not Christ, and are not constrained by his love, go for nothing! When they first from the heart confess their sin, and cry to God for mercy, then they begin really to pray.

**12-16.** *And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

Ananias said to the Lord, "I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem;" and now the Lord says to Ananias, in response to that, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." As he had made others suffer for Christ's name's sake, he must himself suffer in the same way; yet in this he was greatly favored, for it is one of the highest honours that the Lord Jesus Christ can put upon his chosen ones that they should be called to suffer for his name's sake.

**17, 21.** *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been*

*scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, —*

I should like to have heard one of those first sermons of the apostle, and to have seen the astonishment of the people as they listened to the converted persecutor: “All that heard him were amazed,” —

**21, 22.** *And said; is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.*

This exposition consisted of readings from ACTS 9:1-22; AND 22:1-16.

## **ACTS 9:1-22**

**1, 2.** *And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings, and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*

His very breath was threatening. Slaughter seemed to be a necessity of his existence, He was breathing out threatenings and slaughter — could not breathe without them — could not speak without them. So full was he of fury against the people of God, that Jerusalem was not enough for him; he wanted wider hunting grounds; he must go to Damascus.

**3.** *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus.*

There was his prey before him, and the wolf was ready to leap upon it.

**3-5.** *And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who are thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

So it is when God means to save a man. He will make every kick that he gives against the gospel to be like that of an ox that kicks against the goad and wounds itself.

**6.** *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? What a sudden change! Before, he knew what he was going to do. He was going to do his own will and wreak his own vengeance, but now it is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? My will is in a moment subdued.*

What is it thou dost ask of me?"

**6-9.** *And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth: and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the head, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.*

And what a battle went on in his soul then, perhaps even he could scarcely describe afterwards. Brethren, some of you can surely guess, for you, perhaps, have felt the same. Some souls are born to God with terrible pangs; and this man was one. And oh! what strong believers those often are who have great difficulty in coming at peace. "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink."

**10.** *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias;*

One of those to whom Paul had intended to pay his cruel respects.

**10.** *And to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold I am here, Lord.*

A grand way to be able to answer the Lord at all times. May we never be, dear friends, where we shall be ashamed to say, "Behold, I am here, Lord." Some Christians go into very strange company, and they would not like their Master to know. They would be ashamed to say, "Behold, I am here, Lord."

**11.** *And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus:*

The Lord knows the whereabouts of his people. He knows your whereabouts tonight, young man. I only trust that though you are an opponent of the gospel, he has brought you here on purpose that you may become one of his best advocates, through his renewing grace.

**11.** *For, behold, he prayeth.*

There was the secret sign and mark of a changed character, “Behold, he prayeth.” What a wonder! He prayeth — he that breathed out slaughter. He prayeth — he that came to destroy. “Behold, he prayeth.”

**12-16.** *And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.*

And it seemed a gracious retribution of him, did it not? I say not a penal infliction. I know not how to put it better than “a gracious retribution” —that he who made saints to suffer should now have the high privilege to take the front rank in suffering himself. Often, I doubt not, when he was bearing and enduring with such matchless fortitude, he thought of those saints whom he had harried and worried in the days of his carnal estate; and how he must have prized them, and with what wonder must he have said, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all the saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

**17.** *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul,*

Oh! what new words, “brother Saul”! A few days before no man durst have used such language of familiarity to this mighty disciple of Gamaliel, armed with authority from the chief priests. Now how sweetly it must have sounded on his ear, “brother Saul”! Oh! there is nothing that makes us such brothers as the gospel. “This is the dear uniting bond That will not let us part.”

**17, 18.** *The Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*

What else should a believer be but be baptized? It is the very next step which he should take after he has found the Saviour.

**19.** *And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.*

It seemed unimportant to put that in here, did it not? Yet it is not so. While grace heals the infirmities of the mind, bodily food is still wanted for the body; and sometimes it is well with your young convert, when he has been a long time in distress of mind, that you refresh him in body, as well as cheer him in heart.

**19, 20.** *Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.*

And had they ever heard such a preacher before? How they gnashed their teeth on him — the unbelievers; and how the timid saints crept in and heard this man advocate — this man who had had a wonderful twist in his mind from which he never recovered — who had seen something — as yet he himself could hardly tell all that he had seen. Oh! it must have been fine hearing to listen to his preaching that Christ is the Son of God.

**21, 22.** *But all that heard him were amazed, and said: Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.*

And this is the great thing to prove to the Jew. Oh! when shall it come to pass that poor forsaken Israel shall know that this is the very Christ? God grant her restoration right speedily!

## **ACTS 9:1-31**

**1.** *And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,-*

Notice that little word “yet.” “Saul yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord;” but there was to be a point beyond which he could not go. I pray God that there may be such a “yet” as that put into the histories of any here who are opposing God and his Christ. “Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter,” — as if they were his very breath, as if he only lived to blaspheme the name of Christ, and to persecute his followers, — “went unto the high priest,” —

**2.** *And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*

He wanted his hunting-ground enlarged; he had not enough to gratify his malice among the thousands of believers in Jerusalem, so he must go to Damascus to hunt out the Christians there. Paul was always very thorough in all that he did; so, when he was a persecutor, he was a very bitter one. It mattered not to him whether the saints were men or women. In ordinary warfare it is the custom to spare the women. A brave man is satisfied to fight with men like himself; but a bigot’s zeal knows no bounds, and so Saul asked for letters, so that “if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.”

**3.** *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus:*

The lion is about to leap upon his prey. The sheepfold lies in the valley and the wolf surveys it from the hill-side. “Alas for the Church of God at Damascus!” you and I would have said if we had been there.

**3.** *And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:*

A supernatural blaze, as though heaven’s gate had been thrown open, and the glory had come streaming down upon this rebellious man.

**4.** *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

Most people are converted in a somewhat similar fashion to this. There is “a light from heaven” shining through the gospel upon

them, they fall to the ground in penitent self-abasement, and then they hear the voice of the Son of God speaking to their hearts. I do not mean that the external phenomena are the same as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, but the work is the same in its effects, and in some of its processes. Saul “heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” It was a voice divine, majestic, piercing, affectionate, convincing. Saul’s mind was of a deeply logical kind, so Christ’s question was an appeal to his reasoning faculties: “Give the reason for thy present action. ‘Why persecutest thou me?’”

*5. And he said Who art thou, Lord? And the lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks*

I do not doubt that he had been already pricked in his conscience, and he had kicked out as an ox kicks against the ox-goat when he is pricked by it to make him go forward. Saul was a man of strong will and determined purpose. He had already felt in his own heart some of the sorrows that follow from a wrong course of life, yet he resolved to persevere in it, so the Lord said to him, “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks;” and if any of you resist the thrusts of conscience and the strivings of God’s Spirit, you will be like a man, with naked feet, kicking against iron spikes, and hurting himself, but not injuring that against which he kicks.

*6. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*

This was a very natural question from one who had always tried to live by doing. He had been a work-monger up to that very moment, so he naturally cried, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

*6. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*

“Thou must become a disciple, and sit at the feet of another man, of a humbler sort, and thou must learn from him.” Christ will never teach us by visions what we can learn by the ordinary means of instruction, nor will he work miracles where common methods may suffice.

*7. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless,-*

They were struck with astonishment, —

*7. Hearing a voice, but seeing no man.*

A loud voice stunned their ears, but they could not understand its message.

**8, 9.** *And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.*

What a whirl of anguish must his mind have been in all that time! The panorama of Stephen's martyrdom and of the holy men and women against whom he had breathed out threatenings and slaughter would pass before his inward eyes, even though his outward eyes were closed.

**10,11.** *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,*

God knows where every sinner is, the street he lies in, the number of the house, and the name of the owner of the house, so that he can find him when he pleases, or send one of his servants to him. You remember what John Bunyan said to the Quaker who came to see him in prison. The Quaker said to him, "Friend John, I am glad I have found thee at last, for the Lord sent me to thee, and I have been through half the prisons in England trying to find thee." "No, no," said Bunyan, "do not tell me that. The Lord did not send thee to me, for he knows I have been here all these years. If he had sent thee, thou wouldst have come straight to the prison door." When the Lord calls a man to go on an errand for him, he puts his finger on the right spot, and says, "Go there."

**12.** *And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.*

You see how true revelations fit into each other. Something is revealed to Ananias, and it is also revealed to Saul, and therefore it is proved to be true. Some years ago, a brother told me that he had had it revealed to him that I was to let him preach for me in the Tabernacle. I said that of course I would agree to that when it was revealed to me that I was to let him, but I do not believe in lopsided revelations. You will find a great many of those crazy revelations

about, and you may generally judge them in some such common-sense way as that.

**13-16.** *Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

He had made God's people suffer because of their loyalty to Christ, so it seemed only right that he himself should suffer for the same reason.

**17,18.** *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*

As he believed in Jesus, it was right that he should confess his faith in the way that Christ appointed.

**19.** *And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.*

Do admire the tenderness of the Holy Spirit in recording that Saul received meat, and was strengthened. He had been without food or drink for three days and nights, so that it was as right for him to partake of food as to confess his faith by being baptized.

**19.** *Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.*

Thus did the lion lie down with the lamb, and the wolf with the kid.

**20.** *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.*

How he must have startled his Jewish brethren that day! They knew why he had come to Damascus, but, behold, he was preaching the very faith that he had gone there to destroy!

**21-25.** *But all that heard him were amazed, and said: Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and*

*came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.*

I never heard of a more precious basketful of material than that. Sometimes, the greatest of men may owe their safety to the very poorest of instruments; and I think it is the duty of a Christian to avoid trouble if he can, just as our Lord bade his disciples, when they were persecuted in one city, to flee to another. Paul was carrying out that command of his Master. It was not cowardice, it was the very soul of courage, that he might go elsewhere to proclaim the gospel that he had received in Damascus.

**26.** *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.*

They did not admit anybody and everybody into the Church. They guarded it as Christ's Church should be guarded, that unworthy people might not enter it. If any of you should be kept back a little while, you can say to yourself, "Well, they kept back Paul." We are poor fallible creatures, but we try to judge rightly concerning those who wish to unite with us.

**27-31.** *But Barnabus took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem, And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.*

Blessed be God for such a conversion as that of Saul of Tarsus!

## **ACTS 13:13-49**

**13, 14.** *Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem. But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down.*

They would be noticed as strangers who had come thither. The synagogue did not generally contain a very large assembly, and the Jews of the place would be well known to one another, and they would notice that two or three men had come in whom they had not been accustomed to see in their company.

**15-17.** *And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.*

They always liked to hear the story of their race, it was sure to win their attention. Notice how expressly Paul puts it that, though they were a favored people, it was by the election of divine grace that they were such: "The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers." The Lord chooseth whom he will, and he chose the fathers of the house of Israel: "and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt." God took care of them when they were aliens and foreigners under a cruel power in the land of Egypt: "and with an high arm brought he them out of it." This was the glory of Israel; the Jews always delighted to hear of Egypt, and of the Exodus, and of the great things that God did for them in the day of their redemption when, by the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb, they were protected from the sword of the destroying angel.

**18.** *And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.*

It is a continuous history that Paul gives to these people at Antioch, and it brings to their minds the sins of their fathers as well as the grace of their God. These are two things that you and I need always to keep in mind, God's grace and our own sin. Truly, I fear that God has had much provocation from us during our forty years,

even as he had with his ancient people. There is much meaning packed away in that sentence, “Forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.”

**19.** *And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot.*

The Lord did not run back from his covenant. He promised them a land flowing with milk and honey, and he gave it to them, even though seven nations had to be destroyed to make room for them. This verse reminds us of that passage in Isaiah: “since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.” He gave seven nations of Canaan for this one nation of Israel.

**20, 21.** *And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king:*

This was another piece of wantonness on the Israelites’ part. God was their King, yet they must have a visible king, like the other nations by which they were surrounded. They were faithfully warned by the prophet Samuel of the evil consequences that would follow their choice, but they would not be content with their God as their only Ruler: “afterward they desired a king.”

**21-23.** *And God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will. Of this man’s seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:*

No matter where the apostle begins, he comes to Jesus Christ before long. No matter what the preacher’s text may be, he must never close a sermon without having set forth the claims of Jesus. This should be the invariable rule of our ministry, that Christ is the top and bottom, the sum and substance of all our preaching. Paul could truly say, “We preach Christ crucified.”

**24-26.** *When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold,*

*there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.*

This is plain preaching, pointed preaching, bold preaching. Paul did not conceal the truth, though he well knew how objectionable it would be to his hearers, yet he put it before them in the plainest possible terms: "To you is the word of this salvation sent."

**27.** *For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*

It was strange that they should fulfill the prophecies which they had often read, no doubt, with fear and trembling. They became the guilty agents by which the prophecies were fulfilled. Paul's preaching agrees with what Peter said on the day of Pentecost: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

**28-30.** *And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher. But God raised him from the dead:*

Now the apostle has reached the very heart of his judgment, now he has come to the great corner-stone of the Christian faith. Notice that there are no embellishments here; there is not even an anecdote, or a story, by which he may illustrate the truth he sets forth, but just a plain declaration of the great facts of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are the backbone of the gospel; and the more we dwell upon these facts, the better. Let us preach the doctrines that grow out of these facts, for the facts are stubborn things, and if they be backed by the Spirit of God, they will carry all before them.

**31-33.** *And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written*

*in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee.*

Writing to the Hebrews, Paul quotes this passage from the Psalms to prove Christ's Godhead and everlasting filiation, so that he evidently saw more than one meaning in this portion of divine teaching, and we do not err when we believe that no Scripture is exhausted by a single explanation. The flowers of God's garden bloom, not only double, but sevenfold; they are continually pouring forth fresh fragrance.

**34, 35.** *And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

Christ did die, but his precious body was not allowed to see corruption.

**36-41.** *For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*

This is a noble sermon, but again I remark, how simple it is! Like the sermon of Peter, on the day of Pentecost, it is free from that continual calling out of "Believe, believe, believe," which is the habit of some preachers, who never tell the people what they have to believe. Exhortation is well enough in its place; but you must not have all powder in your gun, there must be some shot also. The apostle has solid facts here which he drives home to the heart and conscience of his hearers; he does not forget that the weight and forge of a sermon must lie in the distinct truth which is taught in it.

**42.** *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.*

They would like to hear the same message; so they said to Paul “This sermon was to the Jews. Will you not preach to us Gentiles? We have come in here, and heard what you have said; but you did not speak specially to Jesus; will you do so next Sabbath?”

**43, 44.** *Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.*

There is something attractive about the gospel. I do not think they sent out a trumpeter; the preaching of the gospel is all the trumpet that is needed to gather the people together. If we will but preach it in the power and plenitude of the Spirit of God, it will soon attract a congregation, as it did in this instance.

**45-49.** *But when the Jews saw the multitude, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold; and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.*

God send us days like that, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

### **ACTS 13:13-49**

**13.** *Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.*

“John” — that is, John Mark, as we see by chapter 15. verse 37.

**14, 15.** *But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers*

*of the synagogue went unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.*

The rulers of the synagogue had noticed them as strangers coming in, and perceived that they were Jews, probably by their wearing the same kind of garments as other Jews did.

**16.** *Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.*

Or, rather, “and ye Gentile proselytes, give audience.”

**17.** *The God of this people of Israel choose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he there out of it.*

It is always well to begin with our hearers upon some common ground. So, wishing to persuade these people to receive the Lord Jesus as the promised Messiah, Paul begins with that which was always attractive to their ears, —the history of their nation, with a special mention of the peculiar favor which God had shown to his chosen people Israel in bringing them up out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.

**18-21.** *And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.*

Do you not sometimes hear people speak disparagingly about certain parts of scripture, and say, “Oh, that is the historical part”? Dear friends, never fall into the error of thinking less of one part of Scripture than of another, but remember that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the men of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” This sermon, by Paul, is a rehearsal of Old Testament history; and he would not have spoken unprofitably; you may depend upon that. I would urge you to bear a protest against the method, which seems to be springing up nowadays, of saying, “That part of the Bible is for the Jews;” or “That particular Epistle” — for they speak thus even of the New Testament — “is not for us.” It is all for us, and we are to

seek to profit by every word of it, praying the Holy Spirit to apply it to our hearts.

**22-25.** *And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: when John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.*

Paul went on with his narrative as far as the history of Saul and David, and so he came to greet David's greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He had come by way of Old Testament history to Christ, and by way of John the Baptist to Christ; and that is how the preacher of the gospel should travel. On whatever road he journeys, his terminus must be Christ. The motto of all true servants of God must be, "We preach Christ; and him crucified." A sermon without Christ in it is like a loaf of bread without any flour in it. No Christ in your sermon, sir? Then go home, and never preach again until you have something worth preaching.

**26.** *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God,*

Or, "is a proselyte to God."

**26, 27.** *To you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophet which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*

See how easy it is for people to hear the Bible read, and yet to know very little about what it contains. They may have the lessons read every Sabbath day in their hearing, and yet they may not understand anything that is in them. They may even become themselves great readers of the Scriptures, yet not come to Christ, as it was with those to whom the Lord Jesus said "Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. But ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." If you are content with merely reading or hearing the

Scriptures, and do not come to Christ himself, you stop short of salvation; yea, you stay in a position where you may be capable of the grossest sin, as were these people at Antioch in Pisidia.

**28-37.** *And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher. But God raised him from the dead: and he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his father, and saw corruption: but he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.*

Note how Paul keeps to scripture. An inspired apostle himself, yet he appealed to the Old Testament to support his case. That was the best argument he could possibly use with Jews; and, often, it will be the best that we can use with Gentiles.

**38-42.** *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.*

They did not mind hearing sermons twice in those days. We are not often asked to preach the same sermon over again. But these people wanted to know the truth; and, therefore, they asked to have it repeated. If our people will not receive the gospel the first time we

preach it, we must tell it to them over and over again. With the hammer of the Word, we must smite the same nail on the head again and, again. Even if we do not utter the same words there must ever be the same subject Sabbath by Sabbath, and week by week.

**43-46.** *Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against these things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold,*

Though Jews themselves, they could not bear to see the bigotry of their nation.

**46.** *And said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*

And a blessed turning it has been for you, dear friends and for me.

**47-49.** *For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and-as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.*

## **ACTS 13:14-42**

**14, 15.** *But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after reading of the law and the prophets,*

From which there were always two appointed lessons, one from the writings of Moses, and another from one of the prophets; and on this day it was probably the first chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, or the first chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah — “the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them.”

**15.** *The rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.*

They were seen to be Jews who were traveling, and they were invited by the minister who conducted the service to stand up and say anything they had to say. “Then Paul stood up, and, beckoning, with his hand, said “: —

**16.** *Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.*

You, who, Enough Gentiles, have come to worship Jehovah, God of Israel — “men of Israel.”

**17, 18.** *The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.*

You that are familiar with your Bibles will be struck with the great likeness of this sermon by Paul to that of Stephen. It seems to run on the same lines. Stephen gave the history of Israel to the Israelites. Paul does the same. Ah! we can never tell how great was the influence of that dying Stephen upon this living Paul. Paul is the continuation of Stephen. His blood was not lost in that day when they stoned him to death. From his ashes sprang this mighty preacher of the Word.

**19-22.** *And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet, And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the Son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.*

All this would be very pleasing to the Jews. They were never weary of hearing the ancient history of themselves as a chosen people. Paul ingratiates himself with them. The gospel that he had to preach was bitter to them, but he gilds the pill, and we must do what we can lawfully and properly to win the attention of men and their kindly feeling to us, although we must faithfully preach the gospel. Now he got as far as David into history. Now we will step to Christ.

**23-25.** *Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.*

He brings in the testimony of John, who was universally respected among them. They regarded him as the last of the prophets, and so Paul tries to win their kind feelings.

**26, 27.** *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*

Not knowing it, they have fulfilled the prophecies of old in condemning Jesus, the Son of David

**28, 29.** *And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher.*

You see he has given the story of Christ, his life, his death, his burial, his resurrection.

**30, 31.** *But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.*

He does not expect them to believe without proofs, but he adduces the proof of the resurrection in the many witnesses who saw him after he had

**32-37.** *And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers. God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again: as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy one to see*

*corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption; But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.*

So that David was not speaking of himself, but he was speaking of another and higher David, his greater Son, the Son of God, begotten of the Father.

**38.** *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:*

Now they have it. Now he brings it out very clearly indeed. Glad tidings are now ringing in their ears.

**39.** *And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

The sins which the law of Moses did not propose to touch, yea, all sins which the law of Moses could only typically remove, all these sins are now really taken away by this glorious Son.

**40, 41.** *Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*

You cannot imagine anything more appropriate to the occasion, more properly set forth, more bold, more clear; but these men were not prepared to receive it.

**42.** *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.*

They are earnest hearers who want to hear the same sermon again. But perhaps they did not expect to hear the same words, but to fret the same sense and have it explained more fully that they might the better grasp it. Oh! what a mercy it is, when the congregation is going away, if there are some that stop behind, anxious to learn somewhat more!

## **ACTS 16:9-34**

**9.** *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.*

Our dreams often follow the leading thoughts of the day; or, if not of the day, yet the chief thoughts that are upon the mind. Paul dreams about mission work, for his heart is in it. I should not wonder if some before me, who are deeply engaged in earnest Christian work, have often dreamt about their Sunday-school, or their mission-station. Where the mind goes when we are awake, it often goes when we are asleep. This vision that appeared to Paul was supernatural; and was an indication of what God wanted him to do.

**10.** *And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*

In the vision, the man prayed, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." The best help that Paul could render to the Macedonians was "to preach the gospel unto them." The best help you can give men socially is to help them religiously; and the best religious help is to preach the gospel to them.

**11, 12.** *Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.*

Waiting to know what they were to do. In God's work, we are not to go on in blundering haste. Sometimes, a little waiting may be good for us; and by waiting, we may find out the true path of success.

**13.** *And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made;*

Some quiet corner, where good people were wont to gather by the brook to pray.

**13.** *And we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.*

This was probably the first religious meeting of Christians that was ever held in Europe. It is remarkable that it was a prayer-meeting, a prayer-meeting attended by women, a prayer-meeting to which two ministers came, and preached the gospel to the women who resorted thither. To be able to be present at a prayer-meeting ought always to be reckoned a great privilege to all of us who are

Christians. In this way the gospel first came to us; in this way the gospel will be best preserved to us; and in this way we may best obtain guidance from God as to how we may carry the gospel to others.

**14, 15.** *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized,*

She seems to have become a believer in Christ, and to have been baptized at once.

**15.** *And her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.*

Lydia was evidently a woman of some property. The purple which she sold was an expensive article. She seems to have been engaged in business on her own account; and when Paul met with her, she was far off from her workshop and her home. She had a house, therefore, in the place to which she had come to sell her purple; and she “constrained” the men of God to make use of her house, and to tarry there. Thus was Christianity brought into Europe, for which we praise the name of the Lord.

**16.** *And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.*

She professed to tell fortunes, and to speak under inspiration. She was really “possessed” by an evil spirit.

**17, 18.** *The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.*

Here was an evil spirit bearing witness to the truth of God, and it grieved Paul. When you hear a bad man ridiculing religion, do not be surprised; what else could you expect from him? But if you heard the devil recommending Christ, then you ought to be grieved, for the Lord Jesus does not want patronage or praise from Satan. Men would begin to suspect that Christ was in league with Satan, if Satan

began to speak well of Christ. Dread to be spoken well of by ungodly men; for there is great danger in such praise. There may be a motive at the bottom of the flattery, which may be full of mischief. Paul, being grieved, silenced the demon, and cast him out of the damsel. Like his Lord, he would not allow the devil to testify concerning himself and his mission.

**19, 20.** *And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market-place unto the rulers, and brought them to the magistrates,*

They dragged them into the Forum, the place where the courts usually sat, and brought them before the magistrates, “saying “-what? “These men have cured a demoniac, they have performed a miracle, and cast a devil out of a young woman”? Oh! no; there would have been no wrong in that, so they must invent a charge. What do they say?

**20, 21.** *Saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.*

They did not know that Paul himself was a Roman citizen, or they surely would not have brought such a charge as that against him.

**22.** *And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.*

They beat them first, and tried them afterwards. That is often the rule with those who persecute God’s people: let them be hanged out of the way, and then we will enquire what they teach.

**23-25.** *And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God:*

Another prayer-meeting, and a praise-meeting, too. There were only two persons at it; but they “prayed, and sang praises unto God.”

**26.** *And the prisoners heard them.*

Paul and Silas were in the lower prison. The sound of their prayer and praise rose up through the different tiers of cells where other prisoners were confined.

**26.** *And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.*

This was no common earthquake. An ordinary earthquake might have brought the prison down about their ears; but it would not have loosed the bands of the prisoners.

**27.** *And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.*

For the law was that, if a jailer lost a prisoner, he was to suffer whatever penalty the prisoner would have suffered. He therefore knew that, in all probability, his own life would be taken; and, strange to say, to save his life he would kill himself. Suicide is ever absurd and unreasonable. The worst that could happen to him would be to die by the sword of justice; and to escape from that, he tries to die by the sword of a suicide.

**28.** *But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.*

Every prisoner was loosed from his bands, but not one had escaped; nor had any even attempted to escape, which was another miracle; for men who see their bands broken, and the prison doors open, are pretty sure to run away. These men did not, for a heavenly charm was upon them. They kept in their cells, so that Paul could cry out to the jailor, ‘-Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.’”

**29.** *Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling*

Conscious of the supernatural, compelled to feel the hand which he had never perceived before, he hastened into the inner prison, where he had thrust the servants of Christ;

**29.** *And fell down before Paul and Silas,*

Whom he had handled so roughly just now;

**30.** *And brought them out, and said, Sirs,*

What a word to address to those who were still in his charge as prisoners!

**30-34.** *What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

May God give to many of us to know the happy experience of that believing, baptized, and blessed household!

## **ACTS 18**

Paul had been preaching the gospel at Athens to the most famous men of that city gathered at Areopagus.

**1.** *After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth:*

Another most important city of Greece, where he struck at the very center of the country by preaching the gospel, since these were the centers of commerce, and also of literature.

**2.** *And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.*

Lodged with them.

**3, 4.** *And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tent makers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.*

He stepped into the synagogue, and when the time came for strangers to address the audience he began to argue that Jesus was the true Messiah. Nor did he argue in vain, for there were some who were persuaded. He endeavored to persuade them all, both the Jews and the Gentiles, who came together to listen to him.

**5.** *And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.*

He may not have brought out the whole truth at first, but argued little by little to bring them, as it were, up the steps till they should

be prepared to receive the grand doctrine that Jesus is the anointed one. HIS spirit was pressed at last to come to that point more fully

**6.** *And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.*

Oh! what a blessed “from henceforth” that was for you and for me! He no longer confines his ministry to Jews, but goes out seeking the Gentiles —takes up his true commission — becomes the apostle of the Gentiles. But let all of us take heed of opposing the gospel, because it is not to be trifled with impunity. A time comes at last when God’s gospel seems to have done with us. Its ministers say, “We are clean.” They shake off the dust of their feet, and they go elsewhere to proclaim the gospel to others who may be less opposed to it. What a thing to be able to say, “I am clean.” I wonder how many in this house of prayer could say that of everybody round about them, “I am clean. The blood be on your own heads. I am clean. I have spoken to you about Christ. I have warned you. I have invited you.” “Night and day with tears,” as he says elsewhere. “I have pleaded with you, and now I am clean. I am clean.” You know there is many a man that is clean in the blood of Christ in that sense who has not yet discharged his obligations to his fellow men, and cannot say, “I am clean.” I thought it a grand thing of George Fox, the Quaker, when he was dying, when he said, “I am clean; I am clean of the blood of all men.” To the best of his knowledge he had fearlessly proclaimed all the truth that he knew, where-over he had opportunity. O ministers of Christ, teachers of the young, and all you that know Christ, the Holy Spirit be upon you, so that you may speak the gospel till you can say, “I am clean.”

**7.** *And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man’s house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.*

“The nearer the church, the farther from God.” they say; but it was not so in this case. He was one that worshipped God and his house joined hard to the synagogue.

**8.** *And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.*

That is the old-fashioned way, you know — “hearing, believed, and were baptized.” The new fashioned way is baptized, perhaps hear, and very likely do not believe at all. That is not according to the line of Scripture.

**9-11.** *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them.*

Farmers like to plough good soil, where they expect large harvests. So Paul, who was accustomed to make riving visits to places, on this occasion settled down for a long time — even for a year and a half. It would pay to do it, for God had much people in that city.

**12-13.** *And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat. Saying, This fellow*

“This fellow,” says our Bible, but they did not say that. They had not any word bad enough, so really said “this” —

**13-15.** *Persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.*

I dare say you have heard Gallio condemned. They used to say in prayer, “Such and such a person went on, Gallio like, caring for none of these things”; but in truth Gallio does not deserve to be so condemned. It is no business of the civil magistrate to inquire into the religions of the people brought before him. It is out of his province. He was quite right when he said, “If it be a question of words, and names, and of your law, look ye to it. I will be no judge of such matters.” If the kings and queens of this world had been half as sensible as Gallio, there had been no stakes in Smithfield; there had been no prisons to lock up the Puritans. Religion would be let alone, which is the one thing it wants — free church and free state. We want neither the governor’s help, nor the governor’s hindrance. If he will kindly let us alone, it is all we ask from him; and so far

Gallio is to be commended. But I do not think he acted thus out of any intelligent scruples on that point. He is to be condemned because of the motive. No doubt he was indifferent, and here may none of us imitate him. That he was indifferent and careless is certain, for he did not do his duty. It was his duty to let this good man alone, but it was not his duty to allow the Gentiles, on the other hand, to begin beating the Jews. If there is six of one, there should be half a dozen of the other, and so we do not admire him when we read,

**16-17.** *And he drave them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.*

Perhaps liked it. "You came here," he said, "to accuse Paul, to get him beaten: now the mob is beating you, and serve you right. I shall not interfere. Why did you come here at all to plague me with your questions? Why did you interfere with Paul?" But I should think that this ruler of the synagogue must have opened his eyes when he found himself being beaten, instead of the persons whom he desired to have beaten. It is singular that this name Sosthenes should be used, when further up we find another ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, who wins a believer in Christ. "This was no doubt, one they had set up, instead of Crispus, having rejected Crispus for accepting Christ. And yet this man, Sosthenes, bears the same name as one that is spoken of as a brother in Christ afterwards. I wonder whether that beating did him good — whether, in the providence of God, he was led to ace the hand of providence in this beating falling upon him, instead of Paul; and whether this ruler of the synagogue, who ousted a better man, did himself become a Christian. Let us hope it was so.

**18.** *And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.*

Most probably not Paul, but Aquila had shorn his head, because usually Luke puts the man first. "Aquila, and his wife Priscilla"; but here, in order to state that Aquila had made a vow, he put it, "Priscilla and Aquila." I think it very questionable that Paul ever

shaved his head in that way. I think it was Aquila. If Paul did it, I think he must have been under a sort of mental aberration, as he once or twice besides may have been thought to have been. Even he who, above all men, had cast out Jewish rites and ceremonies, yet, you remember, took Timothy and circumcised him — a most extraordinary action to do, as in this case, if indeed it was he who had shorn his head.

**19.** *And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.*

Though he had turned away from them, yet still his heart is after his own country.

**20-21.** *When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not: But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will.*

Oh! how wise it is to say that, when we are making plans and promises, “If God will.” The short way is to put a little “D.V.,” which means that you are ashamed to say, “If God will.”

**21-23.** *And he sailed from Ephesus. And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.*

For you not only want planting, but strengthening. Young saints, like young plants, want much watering, and Paul took care of them. Evangelists have not half done their duty when they stir up a community unless they go and seek after those who are converted, to strengthen them. Hence the essential need of a permanent pastorate over churches.

**24-25.** *And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord knowing only the baptism of John.*

He had not got farther than that; but it is always well to tell out what you do know. It is the way to learn more; and we doubt not that many a half-instructed Christian is doing good in his way, and it

is not for us to stop him, or to find fault with him, but rather quietly to endeavor to tell him more of the truth. Paul did not say, “Now, Apollos, you must stop this, you know. You had better study. You do not know enough yet,” but he let him tell out what he did know.

**26-28.** *And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.*

Now let us sing ourselves an encouraging hymn that as Christ, the Lord, said to Paul, “Fear not,” so his Spirit may say to us tonight: “Give to the winds thy fears.”

## **ACTS 22:1-16**

**1-2.** *Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense which I make now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)*

Men like to be addressed in their own language; they give the more heed to the message if it is spoken to them in words that they can understand.

**3-9.** *I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom*

*thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.*

Paul's companions could not help sensing that extraordinary light, and though they did not understand what it was, they were alarmed by it. They also heard a supernatural sound, but they could not comprehend what the voice of Jesus said to their leader as he lay prostrate upon the ground.

**10-12.** *And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one, Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,*

These particulars concerning the character of Ananias do not appear in the former part of the narrative. Paul was endeavoring to conciliate his hearers, and therefore he mentioned that Ananias was a devout Jew, having a good report of all his brethren who dwelt in Damascus.

**13, 14.** *Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.*

If Paul was to be an apostle, it was necessary that he should see the Lord Christ, for one of the qualifications of an apostle was that he should be able to bear witness, from his eyesight, and from his hearing, to the existence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore it was that Saul did, at that time, "see that Just One," and did "hear the voice of his mouth."

**15, 16.** *For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

These two things were necessary; first, he was to be baptized on profession of his faith in Jesus, and then, he was to have in his soul a vivid consciousness that his sins were all washed away. This was not baptismal regeneration, for he was already regenerate. It was,

however, the obedience to the Lord's command, which brought with it a sweet reassurance of the forgiveness of his sins.

This exposition consisted of readings from ACTS 9:1-22; AND 22:1-16.

## ACTS 25

*1. Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.*

Porcius Festus had been appointed governor in the place of Felix, who had left Paul a prisoner so as to please the Jews, though he would have been willing enough to release him, if Paul or his friends, would have given him a sufficiently heavy bribe. He had trembled as Paul had "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," but his conscience had not been so quickened as to make him act justly towards the apostle. Yet his unrighteous conduct was made to serve the Lord's purpose, which was that Paul should testify before one earthly ruler after another until he should ultimately appear before the cruel Nero himself at Rome. Paul was at Caesarea, but he was not at once brought before Festus; and when the governor went up to Jerusalem, the apostle's enemies renewed their plotting against him

*2, 3. Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, and desired favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.*

They had been foiled in their previous attempt to assassinate the apostle but their malice led them to try again to put him to death in that dastardly fashion.

*4, 5. But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea and that he himself would depart shortly thither. Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.*

Whether Festus suspected their real reason for being so anxious for him to send for Paul, we cannot tell; but, at any rate, their scheme was once more a failure.

*6, 7. And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea, and the next day sitting on the judgment*

*seat commanded Paul to be brought. And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.*

It was easy for them to lay many and grievous complaints against Paul, yet it was not only difficult but impossible for them to prove their charge against the apostle.

**8, 9.** *While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all. But Festus, willing to do the Jew's pleasure,-*

In that respect he was just like his predecessor, Felix. No doubt he took into account the number and position of Paul's accusers, and thought it would be the wiser policy to side with them rather than with the prisoner; and, therefore, "Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure," —

**9-11.** *Answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.*

As a freeborn Roman citizen, he had the right of appeal to the emperor, and that right he exercised, it may be that he also realized that this was the way in which the Lord's prophecy should be fulfilled: "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at home."

**12.** *Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.*

The die was cast, there was no need to argue the matter any further.

**13-16.** *And after certain days King Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus. And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me,*

*desiring to have judgment against him. To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.*

Festus must have felt profound contempt for the chief priests and elders of the Jews who clamoured for Paul's death even before he had been tried, and he gave them plainly to understand that this was not the Roman if it was the Jewish method of dealing with accused persons.

**17-19.** *Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.*

Festus may have supposed that they would have accused Paul of plotting against Rome, or of some other political crime. He would have thought such matters of far greater importance than the "certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." Paul could make that affirmation with the utmost confidence, for Christ had appeared to him on the road to Damascus, proving without doubt that, though once dead, he was again alive.

**20-22.** *And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar. Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. Tomorrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.*

So Paul's witness-bearing was made to spread still further. It is scarcely possible to conceive of any other circumstances in which the gospel could have been made known to such an audience as the apostle was, on the morrow, to have the opportunity of addressing.

**23.** *And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.*

It was such a congregation as Paul was only too glad to address, and the gospel could not have had a nobler or worthier advocate, yet we do not read of anyone who was present yielding up himself or herself to the Lord Jesus Christ.

*24. And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.*

Festus took care that the Jews should not be able to forget that they had demanded the death of a man who had not even been put upon his trial.

*25-27. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O King Agrippa, that after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.*

The governor talked like a man of sense, and he even went so far as to say that the prisoner before him “had committed nothing worthy of death.”

This exposition consisted of readings from ACTS 25. AND 26; AND 1 JOHN 4.

## **ACTS 26**

*1. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:*

I do not suppose Agrippa imagined that Paul would take all the liberty that he did; but inasmuch as the king had said to him, “Thou art permitted to speak for thyself,” Paul, who, even when he was permitted to speak for himself, did not forget that he was the servant of God, and used that liberty as the servant of God, and so took the opportunity to seek to impress the truth upon the conscience and heart of the king. Thus Paul answered for himself:-

*2, 3. I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.*

It is always well to try to be on good terms with the person whom you wish to impress with the truth of the gospel. Paul therefore did not begin bluntly, as some foolish people would have done, but he addressed the king most courteously and respectfully. I think I see the little man, as he doubtless was. Paul the man with feeble eyes, and with no great bodily presence to command attention, yet bravely stretching out his hand, and, like a preacher, thus addressing Herod Agrippa:-

*4-7. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.*

The Jews still had hope concerning the promise of the Messiah, and all the promises in God's covenant with them; and Paul says that for the sake of this hope he had been led to do that which had now brought him as a prisoner before the king. Notice that the fiction concerning "the ten lost tribes" has no foundation in Scripture. There are no lost tribes, several of them are mentioned by name in the New Testament; the apostle James writes "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," and here Paul speaks of them as "our twelve tribes." The Jews whom we have among us at this day belong to all of the twelve tribes, as they will tell you if you ask them. There are no lost tribes yet to be discovered, neither are we, as a nation, those ten tribes that are supposed to have been lost. We are Gentiles, and not Jews. The apostle speaks here concerning the hope of the whole nation of the Jews. We who have believed in Jesus are the inheritors of that grand hope, as we have understood it aright, and have realized that it is fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only-begotten Son of God.

**8.** *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?*

That great fact of the resurrection of Christ is the corner-stone of the temple of truth, the key-stone of the arch of the gospel. The apostles made this truth very prominent in their preaching, and here Paul began his address with it. It was the great difficulty of the Christian religion at that period, so Paul went straight to it at once.

**9, 10.** *I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem:*

For Paul was the kind of man who, if he thought he ought to do anything, he always did it. Even in his unregenerate state, his conscience, unenlightened as it was, swayed him; but now, with an enlightened conscience, he looked back upon that part of his life with deep regret, and he did not fail to acknowledge and mourn the wrong that he had ignorantly done to the Lord Jesus Christ and his faithful followers.

**10,11.** *And many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.*

Paul was a whole-hearted man; whatever he did, he did intensely; so that, when he did wrong, he did it with a kind of madness. Such a furious hatred of Jesus of Nazareth was upon him that all Judaea was not large enough for the indulgence of his persecuting malice against the saints, so he “persecuted them even unto strange cities.”

**12-14.** *Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

He was like a stubborn ox kicking against the goads; and the harder he kicked, the more the sharp points of the goads pricked him.

**15-18.** *And I said. Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

Part of this address was spoken to Paul by Ananias when he came to open his eyes, hence some have thought that Paul here mixed up what was said to him by Christ, and what was said by Ananias, yet all the while recognizing it as being virtually all one message from Christ; but I think not so. I believe that Paul would have us understand that the Lord Jesus Christ actually said to him, on the road to Damascus, all that we have recorded here; and that when Ananias came to him, he, without having heard what the Lord had said to Paul, said the same thing to him; and this would be a kind of sign and token to the apostle that what was said to him was really a message from God. How often this happens under every true gospel ministry! The very thing that you were talking about while on your way to the service will be spoken to you by God's servant in the house of prayer. That which you were reading before you came here may be the very subject selected for our present consideration, for God has a wondrous way of making one of his calls tally with another, so that the two meeting without any collusion on our part shall confirm and establish one another, and the more deeply impress the heart of the hearer.

**19-23.** *Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of*

*God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other thing than those which the prophet and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.*

Paul stuck to the Scriptures, and to the gospel revealed in them, and was not a teller-out of his own thoughts, and ideas, and notions; but he was a herald proclaiming what his King bade him say, and telling out what the grace of his Master made him only too glad to say.

**24, 23.** *And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the word of truth and soberness.*

He had been “mad” once, as he had just confessed; but he had recovered from that madness. Now how calmly he replies to the taunt of Festus; there is nothing of anger or resentment about his dignified answer, “I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.”

**26, 27.** *For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa,*

Now the apostle comes to close grips with the king:-

**27, 28.** *Believest thou the prophet, I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*

A great deal of effort has been put forth to prove that Agrippa did not say anything of the kind, but that he was only laughing at Paul when he ironically said, “Are you going to make me a Christian so easily as this?” If so, the reply of Paul was singularly inappropriate; but taking Agrippa’s words to be as they appear here, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian,” Paul’s answer can be well understood.

**29.** *And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.*

And in so speaking he adroitly hinted how unfairly he was chained before his judges, and yet how he wished ill to none, but only wished good to all.

**30, 31.** *And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: and when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.*

He had impressed Agrippa most favourably, and it is quite clear that the King was not jesting with him; he was at least convinced that Paul had done “nothing worthy of death or of bonds.”

**32.** *Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.*

But it was not God’s purpose that Paul should be set at liberty; he must go to Rome, and must there, before the emperor himself, bear witness which he could not bear as a free man, but which the emperor must hear when Paul was brought before him as a prisoner who had appealed to him, and must therefore be heard in person.

This exposition consisted of readings from ACTS 25. AND 26; AND 1 JOHN 4.

## **ACTS 26:1-28**

Three times we have in Holy Writ a graphic report of the conversion of Paul. This may be accounted for partly from its being one of the most remarkable events of early sacred history, Paul having had a greater effect upon the Christian Church than any other living man. At the same time I think it teaches us that the Holy Spirit sets especial store by the facts connected with this very remarkable conversion. If he gives it three times, in the sacred volume, we ought to give it a triple attention, and see if we cannot learn therefrom.

**1-3.** *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself: I think myself happy, king Agrippa. because I shall never answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews. Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.*

With what courtesy does he speak! Paul is bold; but see how he is all things to all men! And he begins an address for his life with great adroitness and skill; teaching us that we are to use all the courtesies of life to those to whom they belong, and never to cause needless irritation. There is enough offence in the Cross of itself, without our being offensive when uplifting it.

*4-7. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers. Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.*

For the Pharisees did hold very firmly the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and Paul often instances this, as being the very thing, though no longer a Pharisee, to which he was glad to give witness.

*8-11. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.*

He had the courage of his convictions. Believing a thing, he did not let it lie idle. He regarded the Christians as a pestilent sect, and, therefore, he hunted them down. He abhorred the name of Jesus of Nazareth as that of an imposter, and, therefore, he determined that no stone should be left unturned to overthrow his power.

*12-14. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and*

*saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

Not “It is hard for me to bear it,” but “It is hard for thee”; as if, though conscious of being persecuted, our Lord, in that divine unselfishness which is so natural to him, forgot the kicks that were given to him, and only thought of the injury which Saul was doing to himself, when, like an ox that strikes cut against the goad, he injured himself.

**15-28.** *And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee: delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul,*

Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

## ACTS 27:1-26

**1-3.** *And, when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.*

Even a Roman centurion could see that Paul was no ordinary prisoner, and that it was quite safe to allow him privileges which others might have abused.

**4-12.** *And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone; and, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called the fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more that those things which were spoken by Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete and lieth toward the south west and north west.*

It was quite natural that the centurion should think that the master and the owner of the ship knew more about seafaring matters than Paul did, but the sequel proved that the apostle knew more than they did, for he had access to information that was hidden from them.

**13.** *And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.*

That was not the only voyage that commenced favourably and ended disastrously.

**14, 15.** *But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.*

Apparently, that was the only thing they could do; and, at times, we may find that it will be well to follow their example. When we have done our best, and can make no headway, we had better commit our vessel to the care of God, and “let her drive” wherever he wills.

**16-19.** *And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest the should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; and the third day we cast out with our own hands the tacking of the ship.*

They used all the means in their power, and evidently Paul and his companions took their full share of the work that had to be done: “we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.”

**20-22.** *And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship.*

Paul might well remind the officers of the wise advice he gave them in Crete, but he did not rest content with that, but went on to cheer them as far as he dared, though he again warned them that they would lose their ship. To prove that he was not speaking without due authority, he added: —

**23-26.** *For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it*

*shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.*

The next chapter tells us that the “certain island” was Melita, or Malta as it is now called. In that respect, as in all others, Paul’s prophecy was literally fulfilled, for the ship was lost, but all on board were saved.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 90.; AND ACTS 27:1-26.

### **ACTS 27:11-44**

Paul had advised the captain not to set sail for a while, —

**11-13.** *Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things, which were spoken by Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.*

He is very unwise who trusts the winds, and equally so is he who sets his confidence upon any earthly thing, for fickle as the wind that blows are all things beneath the moon,

**14, 15.** *But not long after there arose against a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.*

You may have a calm at one moment, and a storm at the next, and unless your protection it from above, and your confidence in something more stable than can be found in this world, woe betide you. Sometime, it is well to yield to the stress of circumstances. If you have struggled hard, and can do no more, it is well to leave the result with God.

**16-21.** *And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and fearing lest they should fall into the quicksand, strake sail, and so were driven. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; and the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship; and when neither sun nor stars in*

*many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But after long abstinence*

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They had not the time or the heart to eat, and perhaps scarcely thought of doing so while they were in such imminent peril of their lives.

**21.** *Paul stood forth in the midst of them,*

A prisoner, but the freest man there; despised, and yet the most honoured among them; the bravest heart of all that company of soldiers and sailors.

**21-24.** *And said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.*

Oh, what a privilege it would be if God would say the same to us! If, in the night of trouble, when you are tossed to and fro, mother, father, the Lord should say to you, "Fear not, I have given you your whole family they shall all be saved," you would not mind how fiercely the storm might rage if you could be sure of that. And how happy would my heart be if all that sail in this big vessel were given to me! I should not be satisfied even then; I should want a great many more than that; but, still, what a blessed thing it would be to have every soul that sails with us saved!

**25-27.** *Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island. But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;*

They could hear the roar of the breakers.

**28.** *And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.*

They found that the water was shallowing very quickly, so they knew that they were getting near the shore.

**29.** *Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.*

Then they “wished for the day, “and how often the Christian throws his great anchor out, and wishes for the day, — waiting “till the day break”, and the shadows flee away.” Well, it will not be long. If night lasts through the whole of this life, the morning cometh, — the everlasting morning.

**30.** *And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out the foreship —*

These cowardly sailors meant to get away, and leave the prisoners and passengers and soldiers to perish.

**31.** *Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*

Yet God had said that they should be, so that it is quite consistent to believe in divine predestination and yet to see the utility, nay, the necessity, of the use of means: “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.”

**32.** *Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.*

So that the sailors could not get away.

**33, 34.** *And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat; for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.*

What a grand speech this is! It is the utterance of faith. Talk of eloquence! This is real eloquence, — for Paul to be addressing the people in a storm-tossed ship as calmly as if he were safely on shore.

**35.** *And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.*

He would not eat without giving thanks to God. There are some who do, even as the swine do; but the Christian finds it good at all times, before he eats, to bless the God that gave the food to him. It is a Christian habit which should not be given up. Paul gave thanks

when it was most inconvenient to do so, — when a great storm was raging, and when there were only two or three on board who sympathized with him.

**36.** *Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.*

Courage is contagious, as well as timidity. The holy bravery of one good man may make many others brave.

**37-39.** *And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible to thrust in the ship.*

They wanted to let it go ashore, and break up, and so save their lives.

**40-42.** *And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.*

The soldiers were responsible for them. It would be required at their hands if a prisoner escaped; so, with that cruelty, and yet that obedience to law which was characteristic of the Roman legions, “the soldiers counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.”

**43, 44.** *But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.*

So God had said, “and so it came to pass.”

## ACTS 28

**1-3.** *And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. And the barbarous people shewed us no little*

*kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, —*

It must have been a fine sight to see the great apostle of the Gentiles gathering a bundle of sticks to put on the fire. But the men who can do great things are usually the men who do not disdain to do little things.

**3-5.** *And laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.*

Was not this a fulfillment of the Master's words concerning the signs following faith in him? "They shall take up serpents." Whether this viper had bitten Paul so as to really fill his veins with venom, we do not know, and it is an equal miracle whether it had done so or not. Whether the sting had already poisoned him or not, his life was preserved, and that was sufficient.

**6.** *Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.*

Those who saw what had happened to him regarded it as so marvellous that they thought he must be one of their heathen deities who had come down to the earth. He was not a god, however; but he was a man of God, and God had preserved him in the hour of peril.

**7-10.** *In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.*

Happy island of Melita to have such a missionary driven on its shore, to heal the sick, and preach the gospel to the people. The

calamities of ministers are often a benediction to the people. The shipwreck of Paul resulted in blessing to that island which otherwise it might have missed. Let us, as God's servants, leave ourselves in his hands, and believe that he can sometimes use us better by means of a shipwreck than if he had given the winds and waves charge concerning us to bear us safely to our desired haven.

**11-13.** *And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:*

Those who have ever been there regard the spot as almost sacred where Paul set his foot on his way to Rome. It is a place where there is an abundance of hot springs, a place which of old was frequented for healing; I have stood there with intense delight: "We came the next day to Puteoli:"

—  
**14.** *Where we found brethren, —*

There were some Christians there. See how soon the gospel had spread as far as to this sea-port town; probably some Christian sailors carried it there. Blessed will it be when the ships of Tarshish shall bear not only men specially set apart as missionaries, but when every sailor shall be a missionary for Christ. "We came the next day to Puteoli: where we found brethren," —

**14.** *And were desired to tarry with them seven days: —*

So they were able to have one Lord's day together. They were probably only a very small company of poor Christians, but what a joyful privilege it was for them to have the beloved apostle with them for that memorable week in their lives!

**14.** *And so we went toward Rome.*

Now it was a matching band of soldiers taking them as prisoners to appear before the emperor at Rome.

**15.** *And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and the three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.*

It must have cheered his heart to see that there were some who loved him sufficiently to make a weary tramp along the Appian

Road, to meet him, and salute him in the name of their common Lord.

**16.** *And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.*

This was a great favor, no doubt, but do not forget that he had to have his right hand chained to the left hand of the soldier day and night and that was not very pleasant either for him or for the soldier. Yet he thus had an opportunity of personal intercourse with the soldiers of the Pretorian guard, and as they were continually being changed, Paul no doubt had opportunities of conversation with hundreds of them, and thus the gospel was spread in a very unlikely quarter. Would you like to be chained to a soldier day after day, and month after month? There are some who would not have that experience for half an hour without putting the gospel plainly before the soldier so that he should at least know what it is, even if he did not accept it. That is a wonderful way of preaching, — man to man; when they were chained hand to hand, there was no getting away from what Paul had to say.

**17.** *And it came to pass, that after three days —*

That was quick work; he had only got into his house three days when he began to work: “After three days” —

**17.** *Paul called the chief of the Jews together: —*

There are said to have been seven synagogues in Rome at that time, so the apostle sent for a number of the chief men in the various congregations.

**17-20.** *And when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.*

They were all looking for the Messiah, for there was at that time a general expectation of his coming.

**21, 22.** *And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.*

Although men did not understand it, they spoke against it. This is often a blessing. This is the kind of advertisement that helps the gospel, for if men will only be sufficiently interested in it to speak against it, they will be likely to come and hear it, and some of them will be almost certain to receive it. The truth never spreads so fast as when men oppose it.

**23.** *And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening*

It was a long and blessed day, a grand opportunity for Paul thus to be able hour after hour to expound the gospel. But see the result, — the result which always seems to follow the faithful preaching of the truth: —

**24-28.** *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.*

Oh, blessed confidence of the apostle! If some reject the gospel, others will receive it.

**29-31.** *And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. And Paul dwelt two whole*

*years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, —*

What a subject Paul had to preach about, “the kingdom of God, and those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ,” and how faithfully and fearlessly he proclaimed this great theme!

**31.** *With all confidence, no man forbidding him.*



# ROMANS

## ROMANS 1:1-17

*1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,*

Paul has many titles, and he delights to mention them in writing to these Christians at Rome. He puts first his highest title: “A servant of Jesus Christ.” He glories in being a servant of the crucified Christ, a servant of him who was despised and rejected of men; so do we. Paul was called out from among men, effectually “called” of God “to be an apostle, separated” — set apart — “unto the gospel of God.” He believed that he was separated for that purpose at his birth; but he was specially “separated unto the gospel of God” on the road to Damascus. It is a happy thing when a minister feels that he has nothing to do with anything else but the gospel; that commands all his thought, all his talent, all his time.

*2. (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)*

All the gospel is in the Old Testament as well as in the New, for the gospel which Paul was called to preach was promised afore by the prophets in the Holy Scriptures.

*3, 4. Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

He is as much the Son of God as he was the Son of man. The humanity is as true as the divinity, the divinity as true as the humanity.

*5. BY whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:*

Paul felt that he was sent to preach among all the, Gentiles. He had a large bishopric; James might keep to the Jews, but Paul’s diocese included every land, he was to preach “among all nations.”

**6, 7.** *Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The gospel is good news; and the man who has to preach it is full of good wishes. He wishes the best possible things to everybody with whom he comes in contact: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

**8.** *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

Oh, I would it were so with us, that we had faith that could be spoken of throughout the whole world! I am afraid that some have none to speak of; these saints in Rome had such faith that the noise thereof went abroad everywhere, and all people wondered at them.

**9.** *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;*

No wonder that they prospered so well when Paul always made mention of them in his prayers. Some churches would prosper better if some of you remembered them more in prayer. Of course, you all pray for the church of which you are members; could you not set aside in your heart a little space for some poor church that is dwindling down to nothing? Could you not pray it up again? Who knows what blessing would come upon pastor and people if you bore them on your hearts?

**10.** *Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.*

Paul prayed about that matter, and we may pray about our journeys. I like to hear the old-fashioned expression, “Be pleased, O Lord, to grant journeying mercies,” for there are such things; and when the servants of God are going about, with a view to spread the gospel, we ought to pray that they may travel in safety.

**11.** *For I long to see, you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;*

He wanted to go to Rome because he felt that he would take something with him. He was a poor man, so he could not take any golden or silver gifts; but he was a chosen man, so he believed that he could impart unto them some spiritual gift. Oh, what a largess

does a man of God distribute when his Lord is with him! I do pray tonight that, feeble as I am, and unqualified as I am to bless you, yet even this night all of you who are the people of God may get some spiritual gift. I do not know what you want; but our heavenly Father does. May every one of you get, distinctly from his right hand, some spiritual gift to the end that you may be established, that you may get good root-hold, that you may be firmly fixed on the sure foundation!

**12, 13.** *That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.*

Rome was a sink of iniquity; it was the den of the lions, where Nero was, who would speedily devour, like a lion, the minister of Christ. Paul wanted somehow to get into that old city on the seven hills, and to pluck some fruit for God even from the vine that was planted there; but he was hindered.

**14, 15.** *I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.*

I do not suppose that Paul guessed that he would be sent there at the government expense, but he was. The Roman Empire had to find a ship for him, and a fit escort for him, too; and he entered the city as an ambassador in bonds. When our hearts are set on a thing, and we pray for it, God may grant us the blessing; but, it may be, in a way that we never looked for. You shall go to Rome, Paul; but you shall go in chains. He had not thought of that plan; still, it was the best way in which he could go. I do not know how he could have preached to the Emperor except as a prisoner; but when he was brought before him to be tried, then he had an opportunity of speaking even to the brutal creature who was called the Emperor of Rome.

**16, 17.** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

That is the sum and substance of the gospel: “The just shall live by faith.” The law is, “He that doeth these things shall live by them;” but the gospel is, “The just shall live by faith.” “Wherefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” The Lord give to us all that saving faith, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

## **ROMANS 1:1-25**

**1, 2.** *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.)*

Paul had not seen the Romans when he wrote this epistle. They were strangers to him, and therefore he begins by asserting his apostleship. “called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.” That expression should be true of every Christian minister. We are not apostles; but we are “separated unto the gospel of God.” I do not think that we are called to have anything to do with party politics, or social problems, or any such questions; we are set apart for this purpose. “separated unto the gospel of God.” There are plenty of people who can attend to those things better than we can/ If we mind our own business, or rather, if we mind our Master’s business, we who are ministers will have quite enough to do. “Separated unto the gospel of God.” There are some brethren who in preaching are as timid as mice; but on a political platform they can roar like lions. Had not they better take to what they like best, and give up the work at which they are not at home? For my part, I believe that I am like Paul when he says that he was “separated unto the gospel of God.” I am set apart unto the gospel, cut off from everything else that I may preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God to the perishing sons of men. (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.) Notice, brethren, how reverent the apostles were to Holy Scripture. They had no doubt about its inspiration. They quoted the old Testament, and delighted to make it a kind of basis for the New Testament: “which he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.”

**3, 4.** *Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son*

*of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

What a glorious Lord we serve! He is God's Son: "Jesus Christ our Lord." In his human nature, he is a Man of royal race: "of the seed of David." He was a man, therefore he died: but he rose again, for he was more than man:

"declared to be the Son of God with power."

**5, 6.** *By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:*

That is a sweet name for every truly converted man. "called of Jesus Christ." He has called you personally, he has called you effectually, he has called you out of the world, he has called you into fellowship with himself: "the called of Jesus Christ." The revised version has it: "call to be Jesus Christ's." those who are called by Christ, are called to be his.

**7, 8.** *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

What contrasts we have in the seventh verse! "In Rome, beloved of God." "In Rome called to be saints." God has beloved ones in the darkest parts of the earth. There is all the more reason for them to be saints because they are surrounded by sinners. They must have had true faith, or they could not have confessed Christ between the jaws of a lion, for they lived in Rome, with Nero hunting after Christians, as if they had been wild beasts, and yet they were not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

**9.** *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;*

This man, Paul, did a great deal by prayer. I remember a minister, who is now with the Lord, who was thanked by his people for his wonderful sermons; but he said to them, "You never thanked me for my prayers, yet they were the best part of my service for you." When men of God are mighty in prayer, we owe much to them.

**10.** *Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.*

Paul wanted to go to Rome; but I do not suppose that he ever thought that he would go there at the expense of the government, with an imperial guard to take care of him all the way. We pray, and God gives us the answer to our petitions; but often in a way of which we should never have dreamed. Paul goes to Rome as a prisoner for Christ's sake. Now suppose Paul had gone to Rome in any other capacity, he could not have seen Caesar, he could not have obtained admission into Caesar's house. The prison of the Palatine was just under the vast palace of the Caesars; and everybody in the house could come into the guard-room. And have a talk with Paul if they were minded so to do. I suppose that, whatever I might be willing to pay, I could not have preached in the palace of the Queen, even in this nominally Christian country; but Paul was installed as a royal chaplain over Caesar's household in the guard-room of the Palatine prison.

How wonderfully God works to accomplish his divine purposes!

**11, 12.** *For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.*

Paul wanted his faith to establish theirs, and their faith to establish his. Christians grow rich by an exchange of spiritual commodities; and I am afraid some Christians are very poor because they do not engage in the spiritual bartering with one another. You know how it was in the old time, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another." Shall I tell you how it is now? They that fear not the Lord speak often one against another. That is a very sad difference. Oh, for more Christian communion; for when we blend our "mutual faith," we are "comforted together"; each believer grows stronger as he cheers his brother in the Lord!

**13.** *Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.*

Ah! Paul, you could not go when you wished. Caesar must convoy you.

Your Master would have you go to Rome under the protection of the eagles of your empire. God has servants everywhere: he can

make Satan himself provide the body-guard for his faithful apostle's journey.

**14.** *I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.*

Paul felt a debt to everybody. The God who saved him, had saved him that he might preach the gospel in every place he could reach. Brethren, if you have received much from God, you are so much the debtor to men; and you are debtors not only to the respectable, but to the disreputable, debtors not only to those who come to a place of worship, but to the dwellers in the slums, "to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; to the wise and to the unwise."

**15, 16.** *So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:*

Many other people were ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It was too simple; it had not enough of mystery about it; it had not enough of worldly wisdom about it. Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," and then gives his reason for not being ashamed of it, —

**16, 17.** *For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

The gospel tells us about this living by faith, this believing, this receiving righteousness through believing, and not through working. This is the sweet story of the cross, of which Paul was not ashamed.

**18.** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

Those last words may be read, "Who hold down the truth in unrighteousness." They will not let the truth work upon their hearts; they will not allow it to operate in their minds; but they try to make it an excuse for their sin. Is there anybody here who is holding down the truth to prevent its entering his heart? I fear that there are some such persons, who have come here for years, and the truth has pricked them, troubled them, made them lie awake at night; but they are holding it down, like one who grasps a wild animal by the ears,

and holds it down for fear it should bite him. Oh, sirs, when you are afraid of the truth, you may be well be afraid of hell! When you and the truth quarrel, you had better end your fighting soon, for you will have the worst of it if you do not yield: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness.”

**19, 20.** *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

Men who never heard the gospel can see God in his works if they open their eyes. There is written upon the face of nature enough to condemn men if they do not turn to God. There is a gospel of the sea, and of the heavens, of the stars, and of the sun; and if men will not read it, they are guilty, for they are willfully ignorant of what they might know, and ought to know.

**21, 22.** *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,*

The way to be a fool is to pretend to be wise. A short cut to wisdom is the confession of folly. The near way to folly is the profession of wisdom.

**23, 24.** *And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:*

It is very easy to make a beast of yourself when you have made a beast to be your god, as the Egyptians did, when they worshipped the god that they had made in the form of an ox, or a crocodile, or a cat.

**25.** *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

There are many preachers who have “changed the truth of God into a lie”; and by their exaltation of man, they have “worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.” God save all of us from such idolatry as that! Amen.

## **ROMANS 2:25-29**

*25. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.*

Paul is dealing with the Jew, who was apt to think that he must have a preference beyond the Gentiles on account of his circumcision.

*26-29. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

If this principle were fully recognized everywhere, it would certainly put an end to all that notion of sacramentarianism which some men hold. It is not the outward, not the external, not the form and ceremony; it is the inward work of the spirit; it is holiness and change of heart. Let none of us ever fall into the gross error of those who imagine that there is attached to certain ceremonies a certain degree of grace. It is not so. He is not a Christian which is one outwardly, he is a Christian who is one inwardly.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 110; ROMANS 2:25-29; 3.

## **ROMANS 3**

*1. What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?*

If, after all, both Jew and Gentiles were under sin, what advantage had the Jew by the covenant under which he lived? Or what was the benefit to him of the circumcision which was his distinctive mark?

*2. Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

The Jews were God's chronicle-keepers. They had to guard the holy Books, "the oracles of God." They had also to preserve the knowledge of the truth by those divers rites and ceremonies by which God was pleased to reveal himself of old time.

*3. For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*

Did he not, after all, bless the Jews though among them were unbelievers?

Could it be that their unbelief would turn God from his purpose to bless the chosen people? Would their want of faith affect God's faithfulness?

*4. God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

However faithless men might be, God was still true and faithful. Paul quotes the Septuagint, which thus renders David's words.

*5. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say?*

If it so turns out, that even man's sin makes the holiness of God the more illustrious, what shall we say?

*5. Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)*

Paul spoke as a mere carnal man might be supposed to speak. If ever we are obliged, for the sake of argument, to ask a question which is almost blasphemous, let us do it very guardedly, and say something to show that we really do not adopt the language as our own, just as Paul says, "I speak as a man." If the very sin of man is made to turn to the glory of God, is God unjust in punishing that sin?

*6. God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?*

God will judge the world; and he does judge the world even now. There are judgments against nations already executed, and recorded on the page of history. If God were unjust, how could he judge the world?

*7. For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?*

If God has even turned the opposition of evil men to the establishment of his truth, as he has often done; why, then, are men punished for it? These are deep, dark questions, which come out of the proud heart of man, and Paul ventures to answer them.

**8.** *And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose damnation is just.*

We never said, we never even thought, that we might do evil that good should come; nay, if all the good in the world could come of a single evil action, we have no right to do it. We must never do evil with the hope of advancing God's cause. If God chooses to turn evil into good, as he often does, that is no reason why we should do evil; and it is no justification of sin. The murder of Christ at Calvary has brought the greatest possible benefit to us; yet it was a high crime against God, the greatest of all crimes, when man turned deicide, and slew the Son of God.

**9, 10.** *What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are under sin; as it is written.*

Paul had already proved in the Epistle that both Jews and Gentiles were guilty before God. Now he quotes a set of texts from Israel's own holy Books, to show the universal depravity of men. Notice how he rings the changes on the words "all" and "none."

**11, 12.** *There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

This is the character of all unregenerate men. It is a true description of the whole race of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles. In their natural state, "there is non righteous . . . there is none that seeketh after God . . . there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

**13.** *Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:*

Paul does not use flattering words, as those preachers do who prate about the dignity of human nature. Man was a noble creature when he was made in the image of God; but sin blotted out all his dignity.

**14-19.** *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law:*

The Jews are comprehended here, for they are specially “under the law.” The whole chosen seed of Israel, highly privileged as they were, are described in these terrible words that we have been reading, which Paul quoted from their own sacred Books.

**19.** *That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

That is the true condition of the whole world, “guilty before God.” This is the right attitude for the whole human race, to stand with its finger on its lip, having nothing to say as to why it should not be condemned.

**20.** *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

All the law does, is to show us how sinful we are. Paul has been quoting from the sacred Scriptures; and truly, they shed a lurid light upon the condition of human nature. The light can show us our sin; but it cannot take it away. The law of the Lord is like a looking-glass. Now, a looking-glass is a capital thing for finding out where the spots are on your face; but you cannot wash in a looking-glass, you cannot get rid of the spots by looking in the glass. The law is intended to show a man how much he needs cleansing; but the law cannot cleanse him. “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” The law proves that we are condemned, but it does not bring us our pardon.

**21, 22.** *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon them that believe:*

We have no righteousness of our own; but God gives us a righteousness through faith in Christ; and he gives that to everyone who believes.

**22, 23.** *For there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

There are degrees of guilt; but all men have sinned. There is no difference in that respect, whatever gradations there may be in sinners.

*24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

Dear hearers, are you all justified, that is, made just, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? You are certainly all guilty in the sight of God; have you all been made righteous by faith in the redemption accomplished on the cross by Christ Jesus our Lord? I beg you to consider this question most seriously; and if you must truthfully answer, "No," may God make you tremble, and drive you to your knees in penitence to cry to him for pardon!

*25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*

God holds back the axe which, were it not for his forbearance, would cut down the barren tree. He still forbears, and he is ready to pardon and blot out all the past if you will but believe in his dear Son.

*26, 27. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then?*

Where is it? It is to be found in a great many people. It is common enough; but where ought it to be? Where does it get a footing? It is shut out! There is no room for boasting in the heart that receives Christ. If a man were saved by works, he would have whereof to glory; boasting would not be shut out. But as salvation is all of grace, through faith in Christ, boasting is barred out in the dark, and faith gratefully ascribes all praise to God.

*27-31. It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles, also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

Whether Jews or Gentiles, there was no salvation for them by the works of the law; the only way in which the circumcised or the uncircumcised could be justified was by faith. This principle does not make void God's law; on the contrary, it establishes it, and sets it on the only right and solid foundation. The gospel of the grace of God is the best vindication of his law.

### ROMANS 3

**1, 2.** *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

If it be so that, after all, no outward rite or birth privileges can bestow grace, what advantage did the Jews possess? "Why!" says Paul, "they had this very great privilege, 'that unto them were committed the oracles of God.'" It is no small blessing to have a revelation from Jehovah, and to have the means of knowing what that revelation really is.

**3.** *For what if some did not believe.?*

Many of the seed of Israel did not believe the revelation that was made to them; yet the privilege of hearing it was just as great, even though they slighted it.

**3-5.** *Shall their unbelief made the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?*

Vengeance on a sin which is nevertheless made to turn to his glory?

**5-7.** *(I speak as a man) God forbid.: for then how shall God judge the world? for if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?*

Yet I shall be. If God shall overrule my sin to his own glory, that will make no difference to my responsibility. If I have lied, if I have done wrong in say way, I must be judged and condemned on that account, whatever may be the ultimate result of my sin.

**8.** *And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.*

If any man dares to say that, “Since God turns even evil into good, and by the forgiveness of sin brings glory to himself, ‘Let us do evil that good may come,’” he is wrestling truth to his own destruction, and his “damnation is just.”

**9.** *What then? are we better than they?*

Are Jews better than Gentiles? Or, are Gentiles better than Jews?

**9.** *No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;*

Nobody can read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and follow it by reading the second, without seeing how completely Paul has proved “that they are all under sin.”

**10.** *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

There is not, and there never has been, one of the human race, save our Lord, who also is God, who ever continued to live a righteous life. Adam commenced righteously, but how soon he fell; and all his descendants have both commenced and continued to be sinners: “There is none righteous, no, not one.”

**11.** *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

That is, none do so by nature; those who seek after God are led to do so by a work of grace upon their hearts. Otherwise, men are blind, they do not see the right path; they are willful, and do not seek after God.

**12.** *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

This is God’s verdict upon the whole human race. He has the best opportunity of seeing them, and he has the best capacity for judging them; and this is what he says of all men as they are by nature, “There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

**13.** *Their throat is an open sepulcher;*

A reeking mass of corruption;

**13.** *With their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:*

They are pleased to say a bad word of their neighbor; they are eager to repeat any slander that they hear, and they are not unwilling even to invent it themselves.

**14, 15.** *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood:*

And when, by fear of the laws of the land, they are prevented from carrying out their evil purposes, yet their anger is itself murder in intent; and into what human heart has not that sin glanced?

**16-19.** *Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what tidings soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law:*

All these passages, which Paul has put together in this dreadful mosaic, are taken from the Old Testament, so they apply to the Jews; and he had already proved, in the first chapter, the intolerable vice of the Gentiles, so that now he has shown that both Jews and Gentiles are guilty.

**19.** *That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

The nineteenth-century world as well as the world of the first century, all the world, in all time, has “become guilty before God.”

**20.** *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight:*

Talk not, therefore, of righteousness by your own works. Dream not of meriting eternal life by any attempt to keep the law; for this is the declaration of God’s Holy Spirit, “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: “

**20.** *For by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

The law is a looking-glass; you see your spots as you gaze into it. But no man ever washed his face in a looking-glass; it shows the spots, but it cannot remove them. The law is the indicator and the revealer of sin; but it has no power whatever to put away sin.

**21-24.** *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference; for all have*

*sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

That is a very wonderful verse, every word of it is full of meaning. “Justified”; — that is, accounted just, made to be righteous in the sight of God. “Justified freely”; — without any merit or purchase money. “Freely by laic grace”; — not an act of justice, but an act of mercy has made sinners just in the sight of God. “Through the redemption”; — there is the foundation of it all, we are redeemed by precious blood: “Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

**25-27.** *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then?*

Boasting is sure to be somewhere handy, ready to creep in if it can, for we are all prone to it; it is the common sin of our race: “Where is boasting then?”

**27.** *It is excluded. By what law?*

It is shut out; but by what law is it shut out?

**27.** *Of works?*

No; for, whenever we think that we have been performing any good works, we begin to boast at once.

**27.** *Nay: but by the law of faith.*

For if we are saved by believing, if we are justified freely by God’s grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, then there is no room for boasting.

**28.** *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

“We conclude” — we are shut up to this belief, “that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

**29.** *Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:*

He saved Abraham by faith, and he saves us by faith. The same saving principle is applicable to all parts of the human race.

**30, 31.** *Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then malice void the law through faith?*

Some will be sure to say so; but it is not true.

**31.** *God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

There is no one who so much loves the law of God, and delights in it after the inward man, as the one who is justified by faith. There is nothing that so honours the law as “the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.” It establishes for ever the law, even as Christ said to his disciples, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

### **ROMANS 3**

**1, 2.** *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

The Jews of old had a great advantage, for they had the truth when other men had not. The voice of God spake to them clearly, when only here and there, to a few chosen ones beside, was the voice of God delivered at all.

**3.** *For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*

It was a privilege to belong to the Jewish people, even though some, and many through their unbelief, did not avail themselves of the privilege.

**4-7.** *God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory: why yet am I also judged as a sinner?*

Here is another objection; if it be so that, somehow or other, the sin of man is over-ruled to magnify the grace of God, why am I then blameworthy? But the Apostle stamps this out as an evil Suggestion and a very moral disease.

**8-11.** *And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

The whole human race has sinned against the Most High, and has become alienated in mind from the great and good Creator.

**12.** *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no not one.*

What can be more expressive, what can be more plain than this? The whole race estranged from God and given up to sin.

**13-18.** *Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

Here is a description of all men. If some say, "Well, my feet were never swift to shed blood," you probably have not been put into circumstances which would evoke that cruel passion. So we thought till lately: we thought we were all so civilized that we were to have war no more. Believe me, let the trumpet be sounded and cannon be heard, and there is a devil in our humanity which would not soon be awakened, and we, too, might become as fierce as any other nation. It is still true of men.

**19, 20.** *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

It is like a looking-glass that shows us our blots, but it does not wash them away. The law is the standard which shows us how short we are of God's glory; but it does not make up our shortcomings. It is a killing, not a saving thing. By the law, no man ever was, or ever will be, saved. By the law, we guilty ones are condemned.

**21, 22.** *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets: Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference-*

No difference first of all in the sin; we are all guilty and all condemned —no difference in the way of salvation. Whoever believes in Jesus is justified by faith in Jesus — there is no difference.

**23-26.** *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded.” It is shut out. If men be saved not at all by works, but altogether by the free grace of God through the merits of Christ, then boasting hath the gate shut in its face. But by what law is boasting shut out?

**27.** *Where is boasting then?*

“By works?” Nay: but by the law of faith.

**27.** *It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*

If we were to say God justified man on the ground of law without their perfectly keeping it, we should, make void the law; but when we teach glint God justifies men of his free grace and mercy on account of Christ’s having kept the law and having fulfilled its fullest demands, we do not make void the law, but we establish the law.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 110; ROMANS 2:25-29; 3.

### **ROMANS 3**

**1, 2.** *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

It was a great thing to be a Jew in those old times. When all the rest of the world was in the dark, the Jews had the light: "Unto them were committed the oracles of God."

**3.** *For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*

That is to say, if they did not believe God, did that make him untrue?

**4.** *God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

Whatever men did under the old law, however faithless they might be. God was true and faithful still.

**5, 6.** *But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?*

Whenever anybody insinuates that God is not just, Paul protests against such an idea. "No," says he, "he must of necessity be just because he is God; for how could he judge the world if he were unrighteous?"

**7, 8.** *For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.*

No Christian man ever did say, "Let us do evil that good may come." If anybody else ever does say it, his condemnation is most just. Albeit that God, in infinite wisdom, does cause even the sin of man to illustrate the greatness of his grace, yet that by no means excuses his sin, but leaves it an abominable evil, most hateful in the sight of the thrice-holy Jehovah.

**9.** *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;*

Read the earlier chapters of this Epistle, chapters that are enough to make the heart sick to read them, and to make the head ache with the memory of them, and when you have read them, you will say that Paul has proved that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin.

**10.** *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

Note in the passage we are going to read how Paul rings the changes upon those two words, “All” and “none.” He begins with the word “none.”

**11, 12.** *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Yet men come and talk to us about the righteous heathen whose virtues they extol, the imaginary good people, for there are none such actually in existence. Here the Lord himself is speaking, and the Spirit of God is quoting from passages of the Old Testament, which he puts together to describe the character of humanity. How sweeping are all the terms! “There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

**13-16.** *Their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways:*

How true that last verse is of many today! Their sins are destroying them, the lusts of the flesh destroy the body, drunkenness and such like sin are destructive habits, and they make those who practice them to be miserable: “Destruction and misery are in their ways.” What miserable persons, what miserable families, what miserable countries, are made by indulgence in sin! There is no true happiness without holiness.

**17.** *And the way of peace have they not known:*

Quietness, happiness, and rest are not known by sinful men. They are not in the way of finding peace.

**18.** *There is no fear of God before their eyes,*

How true is this terrible accusation, especially of this present age! Men seem to be casting off all fear of God. Anyone who reads human history will, I think, detect that the present condition of society in our country, religiously, is wonderfully like the condition of France before the great Revolution, which brought so much bloodshed with it. Everything seems loosening, and broadening, and

tending downwards; and especially “there is no fear of God before their eyes.”

**19.** *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all, the world may become guilty before God.*

Every man by nature tries to open his mouth, and say the best he can for himself, but it is the object of God’s law to shut every man’s mouth; and when we come to that condition, then there is hope for us. When we have nothing to say for ourselves, then the Lord Jesus will open his mouth for the dumb, and plead for the guilty in the courts of God.

**20.** *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin,*

All the law can do is to show us our sin. The law is a mirror, and looking in it you can see your spots; but you cannot wash in a looking-glass. If you want to be cleansed from your stains, you must go somewhere else. The object of the law of God is not to cleanse us, but to show us how much cleansing we need; to reveal our disease, not to find a remedy for it.

**21, 22.** *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe:*

You see, we cannot become righteous by the law. Paul says that there is no one who has ever obtained righteousness in that way. We, on the contrary, have so sinned that we never can become righteous through the law; but there is a new way of righteousness, the way of the righteousness of God; and God’s righteousness is much better than the best human righteousness can ever be conceived to be. There is a righteousness which comes to us by faith in Jesus Christ, not by doing, but by believing, a righteousness which is freely bestowed upon all them that believe.

**22-24.** *For there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

I have heard persons ask, “Why do you say, ‘free grace’? If it is grace, it must be free.” Well, we say “free grace”, because the

Scripture says, “freely by his grace”; and as the Lord never uses superfluous words, we conceive that we are not guilty of tautology when we say “free grace,”

**25, 26.** *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

Not of him who works for salvation, but of him who believes; not of him who merits, but of him who trusts. This is God’s way of righteousness, and we are sent to declare it. Oh, that the Spirit of God may be given to make the declaration acceptable to your hearts!

**27.** *Where is boasting then? It is excluded.*

Shut out, done with.

**27.** *By what law? of works?*

No, no, the law of works would have allowed us to boast. We should have merited whatever we earned by our own excellence, and we might have gloried in it.

**27-31.** *Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yea, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

This exposition consisted of readings from Romans 3., And 4:16-25.

## **ROMANS 3:9-27**

**9.** *What then? are we better than they?*

The first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans contains so horrible an account of the manners of the Gentiles, the heathen of Paul’s day, that it is one of the most painful chapters in Scripture to read. Not long ago, one of our missionaries, out in China, was attacked concerning the Bible on this very ground. One of the learned men said to him, “This Bible of yours cannot be as ancient as you say that it is, for it is quite clear that the next chapter of the Epistle to the Nomads must have been written by somebody who had been in China, and who had seen the habits and ways of the

people here,” — so accurate is the Holy Spirit, who knew right well what the ways and manners and secret vices of the heathen were, and still are. But the Jews said, “Ah, but this is a description of the Gentiles.” So Paul replies, “What then? are we better than they?”

**9, 10.** *No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentile, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

Then he selects passages out of different parts of Scripture to show what man is by nature.

**11-18.** *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.*

These are all quotations from Old Testament Scriptures, from their own psalmists and prophets, from whom Paul quotes to the Jews so that they might see what their own character was by nature.

**19.** *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

The law was given to the Jews, and the descriptions which it gives must be descriptions of the Jews “Therefore,” says Paul, “as Gentile mouths have been already stopped by the descriptions of their vices, you also, the favored people of God, have your mouths stopped by the descriptions of yourselves taken from your own prophets.”

**20.** *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh —*  
Whether Jew or Gentile, —

**20, 21.** *Be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now —*

Since man is lost, since man is guilty, —

**21-27.** *The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets: even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them*

*that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God, to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then?*

If salvation is given to the guilty, and if all are guilty, — if no one can claim exemption, and yet salvation is freely given, — what then? Why, salvation must be purely by the grace of God; so let grace have all the honour. “Where is boasting then?”

**27.** *It is excluded. By what law of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*

The law of works sometimes aids boasting, for a man rejoices and glories in what he has done; yet the law of works ought to stop our boasting because we are guilty in God’s sight. The law of faith does stop our mouth, because we are under obligation to God, and do not dare to boast, seeing that we have nothing of good but what we have received from God.

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 3:9-27; 5:6-11; 8:1-32.

## **ROMANS 3:9-31**

**9-18.** *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher: with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood.’ Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way ,of peace have they not known .’ There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

This is a description of man given ‘by prophets in the olden times. “Now,” says Paul, “we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law.” So that this is a description of the Jews, a description of the people who had the

light, the best people that then were upon the face of the earth, and if these be the good people, where are the Gentiles, the bad ones, without the light?

**19- 22.** *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who ,are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets: Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto ,all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*

There is no righteousness of works on the face of the earth. The law 'itself describes men as being sinful from their throat to their feet. Almost every member of the body is mentioned and described as being foul with sin. But, says Paul, there is another righteousness on the face of the earth, and that is the righteousness of God's grace, which comes through believing in Christ.

**23-31.** *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

### **ROMANS 3:19-31**

**19, 20.** *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the*

*deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

The law can convict and condemn, but it can never justify the guilty. Its special work is to prove that they are not justified in sinning, and to stop their mouths from uttering any excuse for their sin.

**21-24.** *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

Now there comes in a new principle, — the principle of grace, which accomplishes what the law never could accomplish; that is, the free justification of all the guilty ones who believe in Jesus. And this justification is a righteous one, seeing that it is based upon “the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:” —

**25-27.** *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*

Faith’s empty hand receives the free gift of grace, and that very fact excludes all boasting.

**28-31.** *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 3:19-31; AND 4:1-21.

## **ROMANS 4**

**1.** *What shall we say then that Abraham our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?*

What blessings did really come to Abraham, the father of the faithful? What is the nature of that covenant of grace which God made with him?

*2. For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.*

Certainly, before God, Abraham neither gloried nor yet was justified by his works.

*3. For what saith the scripture?*

That is the question for us always to ask, “What saith the Scripture?”

*3. Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*

There is no doubt about that point, for in Genesis 15:6 we read, “He believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

*4. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*

He gets what he earns, what he deserves to have, what he receives is “not reckoned of grace, but of debt.”

*5-8. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth 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.*

So then it seems that the blessings of salvation come to men through faith, and not through their own efforts,-not as the reward of merit, but as the simple gift of God’s grace.

*9. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?*

Is this blessing entailed upon the natural seed of Abraham alone, or is it for others besides the Jews?

*9, 10. For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.*

If you turn again to Genesis 15:6, and then to 17:10, you will find that Abraham was justified by faith before the rite of circumcision was instituted. The blessing came to him “not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.”

**11, 12.** *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.*

The vital question is not, “How were we born?": or “What rites and ceremonies have been practiced upon us?" but, “Do we believe in God? Have we true faith in God’s Word? Are we trusting our souls to the keeping of God’s Son?"

**13.** *For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

The law was promulgated on mount Sinai four hundred years after the covenant of grace was made with Abraham the father of believers, and so made with all believers, for they are his true seed, and God has entered into a covenant of grace and salvation with them.

**14, 15.** *For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.*

So that the law is not for justification, but for condemnation. It is the law that reveals sin, and that shows sin to be sin; so men can never become right with God by the law.

**16.** *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed;*

That is, to all believers, who are the true seed of Abraham. He is the father of the faithful, and if thou art one of the faithful, he is thy father; and the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed was made with thee, and on thy account, if thou art indeed a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**16-22.** *Not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (as it is written. I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness..*

O soul, if thou art like one who is dead, if thou art devoid of all strength, and grace, and savor, if thou canst but believe in God who can quicken the dead, if thou wilt but trust thy soul in the hands of him who is able even to raise dry bones out of their graves, and make them live, thy faith shall be imputed unto thee for righteousness! Thy faith is that which shall justify thee in the sight of God, and thou shalt be "accepted in the Beloved." Oh, what marvels faith works! This is the root-grace, all manner of good things spring from faith, but there must be faith as the root if there are to be other graces as the fruit. Do thy God the honour to believe him,-to believe that he cannot lie,-to believe that he has never promised what he is not able to perform. If thou wilt do that, it is clear that thou art one of Abraham's seed, and the covenant made with Abraham was made with thee also.

**23-25.** *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

See the great object of saving faith,-Christ, once dead, has been raised from the dead, and if thou wouldst be saved, thou must rely upon the crucified and risen Saviour. If thou thus believest that Jesus the crucified is the Christ of God, the anointed Messiah and Redeemer, thou provest that thou art born of God; and if thou trustest thyself to the risen and glorified Christ, thou hast risen in him, and thou shalt rise to be with him for ever and ever.

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 4., AND 5:1, 2.

## **ROMANS 4:1-20**

**1-3.** *What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*

He stands as the great Father of believers, and this is the charter given to him, and given to all believers in him. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."

**4.** *Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*

That is to say, to him who hopes to be saved by his works, to whom salvation is of merit. He has worked for the reward. He has earned it. Do not talk about grace in that case.

**5.** *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

This is the man who does not go upon the line of works — who does not rest in his works at all, or bring them as a price to God. "His faith is counted for righteousness." It is a very wonderful thing that faith should stand in the stead of righteousness, and should make righteous all those that believe in God by Jesus Christ.

**6-8.** *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth 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.*

Instead of being a worker, this man had been an offender — a sinner. God did not impute it to him. He was a believer, and God imputed righteousness to him on account of his faith, and did not impute sin to him. Then comes a very important inquiry.

**9.** *Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?*

Is circumcision so necessary that a man is justified by faith after he is circumcised, and could not be so justified if he were an uncircumcised man?

**9, 10.** *For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.*

How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Look back to the history. See in what condition Abraham was when faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. Was it when he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? The answer is: —

**10, 11.** *Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised:*

But the sign is to follow the thing signified. He is, first of all, justified by his faith, and then afterwards he receives the token of the covenant.

**11.** *That he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised: that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:*

It is a very remarkable fact. A great many readers of the Book of Genesis would never have noticed it if the Holy Ghost had not called attention to the fact that father Abraham was justified by his faith before he was circumcised; and this is the reason of it — that he might be the father of all believers, whether they be circumcised or uncircumcised. “That righteousness might be imputed to them also.”

**12, 13.** *And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

For the law was not even given when that covenant promise was made. The law was 400 years afterwards. The covenant of grace was the oldest covenant of all, and it shall stand fast, whatever shall happen.

**14.** *For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:*

If you are upon that tack of salvation by the law, then what have you to do with faith? And what have you to do with promise, and

what have ye to do with Christ? You are on a different line altogether.

**15.** *Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.*

That is plain enough. You cannot break a law if there is not any; and thus, through our sinfulness, the law becomes a cause of sin, and never does it become the cause of justification.

**16.** *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace:*

Salvation is by faith alone, that it may be seen to be of the free favor of God, that we may not look to merit or look to human strength, but may look away to the abounding mercy of God in Christ Jesus.

**16, 17.** *To the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.*

What a God we trust in — a God who quickeneth the dead. We have no faith unless we believe in such a God as this. We shall need such a God in order to bring us safely to his right hand at last.

**18-20.** *Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God:*

Men seem to think that only workers can give glory to God; but there is more glory given to God by one drachma of faith than by a ton of works. After all, works usually generate conceit and pride in us. But faith lays itself low before its God, and gives to him all the glory. God is never more glorified than he is by the believing confidence of his people when difficulties seem to come in the way. He was “strong in faith, giving glory to God.”

## **ROMANS 4:1-21**

**1-8.** *What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the*

*scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth 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.*

There is a special blessedness, therefore, which comes to those who, by faith, are under the dispensation of grace. It came to Abraham, and it came to David; yet both Abraham and David were circumcised men belonging to a special race. So the question naturally arises, —

**9-12.** *Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.*

The historical argument is a very forcible one. The blessing was not given to Abraham as a circumcised man, but as a believing man; and hence it comes also to all of us who believe. What a mercy it is that there is, in this sense, no distinction between Jew and Gentile now! I hate that plan of reading the Scriptures in which we are told, when we lay hold of a gracious promise, “Oh, that is for the Jews.” “Then I also am a Jew, for it is given to me.” Every promise of God’s Word belongeth to all those who have the faith to grasp it. We who have faith, are all in the covenant, and are thus the children of faithful Abraham; so be not afraid, ye who are the true seed, to take every blessing that belongs to your father Abraham and to all the seed.

**13, 14.** *For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:*

But that would also make void circumcision and the whole of the ancient covenant, seeing that the blessing was given to a man whom God had chosen before his circumcision, and before the ceremonial law had been promulgated.

**15-17.** *Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,)*

Not a father of one select race of people only, but a father of all who, in any land, and speaking any language, are believers in the glorious Jehovah, who is the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob.

**17.** *Before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*

Abraham was a believer in the God of resurrection, expecting to see Isaac raised up from the dead if he did actually offer him as a sacrifice to God. He was a believer in things that were not yet apparent to him, looking forward to them, and expecting to see them in due time; believing in them because he believed in God, who “calleth those things which be not as though they were.”

**18-21.** *Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 3:19-31; AND 4:1-21.

## ROMANS 4:16-25

**16.** *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,*

Abraham is the father of all who believe, whether they be circumcised or not; and the promises made to him belong to them also.

**17, 18.** *(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.*

He was an old man, with a very aged wife, yet the Lord promised that he should be “the father of many nations.” He firmly believed that which was spoken, and in due time it came to pass.

**19-21.** *And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

That is the kind of faith we want, the faith that does not enquire how God can perform his promise, but believes that he will do it.

**22, 23.** *And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him*

The imputation would be enough for Abraham without any writing; but as it is written, it is for our instruction, and for our comfort.

**24, 25.** *But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

May the Lord bless to us our meditation upon this precious portion of his Word!

This exposition consisted of readings from Romans 3., And 4:16-25.

## ROMANS 5

1. *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with, God —*

It is a matter of present possession, and present enjoyment. Whatever tribulation there may be in the world, “we have peace with God.” Blessed be God for that glorious fact! We may not have peace with all men, though we would seek to have that; but “we have peace with God.”

1, 2. *Through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

So we ascend this golden ladder, from faith to peace, from peace to access with God, and from this to joy by the way of hope. Happy people, who know this blessed way of climbing out of the sorrows of the present into the glory that shall be revealed!

3. *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also:*

Present trials even become subjects for thanksgiving. Surely, they have lost their sting when patience accepts them, and faith rejoices in them.

3-5. *Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, and experience, hope: and hope maketh, not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

Like a sweet perfume, which enters every room, and fills every nook and cranny in the house, so does the delightful love of God fill the entire soul when, by the Holy Ghost, it is shed abroad in the heart. Beloved, may you feel that blessed influence this evening! This next verse may help us to love God, and to feel the love of God shed abroad in our hearts.

6. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

He did not regard us as saints, but as actually ungodly, when he died for our redemption. It was not man’s righteousness that brought Christ from heaven; but man’s sin, and the infinite pity of God.

7. *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:*

Though he were as just as Aristides, though he were renowned for justice, nobody would die for him. There is no such attraction in

the virtue as would win anyone's love, so as to die for the man who displays it.

**7.** *Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.*

For a benevolent, large-hearted, kindly-disposed man some might dare to die. Such a thing is not likely; but it is possible.

**8.** *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

We were without any attraction, without any righteousness, without any goodness, yet Christ loved us. Out of the graciousness of his own heart he loved us, according to that text, "I will love them freely."

**9.** *Much more then,*

See how the apostle, when he had uttered a great truth, proceeds to say, something greater still. Just before, he had written, "And not only so," and now he says, "Much more then,"

**9.** *Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

If Christ died for us when we were sinners, will he not save us now that he has made us saints? If, when we were condemned, he redeemed us, will he not preserve us now that we are justified? This is a strong plea for the final perseverance and ultimate salvation of all believers

**10, 11.** *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so,*

The apostle is again up on the wing; he cannot fly high enough to describe all Christ's work. "And not only so,"

**11.** *But we also joy in God —*

That is a delightful experience, joying in God himself, in the very character and person of God. So perfectly reconciled are we that, not only do we rejoice in God's gifts, and in his mercy; but we swim in a sea of delight in God himself: "We also joy in God" —

**11.** *Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

Now comes an admonition.

**12.** *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

Sinned, that is, in the first man.

**13, 14.** *(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

I suppose that Paul refers even to little children, who "had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," and yet died as the result of Adam's sin.

**15-20.** *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one: much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon, all men, unto Justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.*

Just as, sometimes, a physician may give a medicine which causes the disease to be more fully developed in order to its ultimate cure, so does the law make a discovery of our sin to us, and it also excites us to greater sin, by reason of the enmity of our nature, which is opposed to the law of God, and becomes the more active the more clearly the law is known, even as Paul says, further on in this Epistle, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

**20, 21.** *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Blessed be his holy name! Amen.

## ROMANS 5

**1.** *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

Do not let us simply read these words, but let us each one say in our hearts, "That is true; I have believed in Christ, therefore I am justified in the sight of God, and therefore I have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." There is nothing in the world that is half as valuable as the two precious gems in this verse, — justification and the peace which follows it.

**2.** *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

See what we owe to Christ, — not only justification and peace, but we have access into the grace in which we stand; for, when a man is at peace with God, then he longs to get to God, and to speak with God. Christ is the door, and Christ is the way; we come to God by Jesus Christ. This is no small privilege. Oh, you who have ever felt what it is to be shut out from God, let your heart sing as you know that you now have access by faith into this grace wherein you stand! Well may the apostle add, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" or, if there is any man who may and must rejoice, it is the man who has peace with God, and expects to dwell with God for ever, having access to God by Jesus Christ.

**3.** *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also:*

Paul is going upstairs, as it were, — rising from one platform to another. There is enough of glory in Christ to wrap up all our troubles in; it makes the black white, and the dark bright.

**3.** *Knowing that tribulation worketh patience;*

A man who never suffers does not know what patience means; but trial works patience, yet not of itself. Trials work peevishness and murmuring and discontent; but grace brings sweet out of bitter, and — "tribulation worketh patience;" —

**4, 5.** *And patience, experience and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

Do you know what this means, dear friend, or is it all Greek to you? The Lord make it indeed plain every-day English to you! May

you understand it, feel it, know it, prove it, taste it, enjoy it! If you do so, happy indeed are you.

**6.** *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

Not, “Christ died for saints, because the saints were such gracious people.” No, no; but, “when we were yet without strength,” — when we could lift neither hand nor foot to help ourselves, — “in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

**7.** *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:*

For a man who is perfectly just, — there are few who would be willing to die for him.

**7.** *Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.*

For a generous, noble-hearted man, some might be willing to die; yet there is a peradventure even about that.

**8.** *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

When we were not righteous, when we certainly were not good, when the whole description of our character could be summed up in that one word “sinners” — rebels offending against God: “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

**9.** *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

He died for us when we were unrighteous; so, now that he has made us righteous in his own righteousness, he will never cast us away. That doctrine of believers falling from grace, and perishing, is clean contrary to Scripture: “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

**10, 11.** *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God —*

See, the apostle has gone up to another platform. The gospel is a tale that we may be always telling, but it can never be fully told. It is a light that keeps on breaking upon us more and more; and even when we have come to what we suppose is the fall noontide of it, there is still seven times as much glory yet to be revealed. Yes; we go “from strength to strength.” “and not only so, but we also joy in God “ —

**11-21.** *Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin/ and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## **ROMANS 5**

**1.** *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

This verse deserves to be printed in letters of gold. If you can truthfully say this, if it is indeed true of you, you are the happiest people under heaven. Let us read the verse again: "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

**2.** *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

We are not only at peace with God, but we are permitted to draw near to him, we have access to him, we have access to his favor, to

his grace. We may come to God when we will; for he is reconciled to us, and we are reconciled to him, so we may now think of him with joy and gladness.

**3. *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also:-***

Somebody seemed to say to the apostle, “You talk about peace with God, and access to God; but you are troubled in mind, you are sickly in body, you are poor in estate, just as other people are;” so Paul replies, “Yes, we know that it is so, “but we glory in tribulations also:” —

**3. *Knowing that tribulation worketh patience;-***

It is sent for our good; we accept our trials as a part of our estate, and in some respects, the very richest part of our estate. We get more good out of our adversity than out of our prosperity. Our troubles have made men of us, whereas our joys might have unmanned us. Trials have braced us up, and we glory in them, “knowing that tribulation worketh patience;” —

**4. *And patience, experience; and experience, hope:***

The longer we wait, the brighter do our eyes get. Our very trials when they have passed over us, leave us stronger and happier than we were before.

Our experience works in us hope.

**5. *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.***

What a blessed thing it is that, when troubles are shed abroad outside us, the love of God is shed abroad inside us; when we are tried without, we are comforted within; and so we are made strong, and we have no cause to fear.

**6. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.***

And as he died for us when we were ungodly, what will he not do for us now that he has sought us as his own? He gave the highest proof of his love to us when we were most unworthy of it, so will he leave us now? God forbid!

**7. *For scarcely-***

Now the apostle goes away from his theme, carried away by the still greater subject of the love of God in Christ Jesus, and the way

of reconciliation by Christ, he goes on to that theme: “For scarcely”

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**7. *For a righteous man will one die:-***

However “just” Aristides might be, nobody would die for him. However “righteous” a man might be, he would not, by his justice or righteousness, win enough affection to induce anybody to die for him.

**7. *Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.***

There might possibly be some who would die for a John Howard, or a man of that ilk.

**8. *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.***

When we were not even just, much less good, “Christ died for us.”

**9. *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.***

As he died for us, he will certainly save us. He who died for the ungodly will never cast away those whom he has justified. The death of Christ for his own people is the guarantee that he will love them even to the end.

**10. *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.***

Did he love us when we were his enemies? Then most assuredly he will love us now that we are his friends. Did his death save us? Then, will not his life also save us? As he took such pains to reconcile us to his Father, will he not take equal pains-nay, “much more” to preserve us safe to the end?

**11. *And not only so,-***

Paul seems to go up a ladder, and when he gets to the top of it, he sets up another on the top of that one, and proceeds to mount that. This is the second time that we have read, “And not only so,”

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**11. *But we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.***

Christ has made atonements for us, and God has accepted that atonement on our behalf. We also have received it ourselves and

now we are glad in God-glad that there is a God, glad that there is such a God, and glad that he is our God and Father in Christ Jesus.

*12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

It was by one man's sin that we all fell through the first Adam. Does anyone object to the justice of that? I pray you, do not object to what is your only hope. If you and I had each one sinned for himself or herself apart from Adam, our case would probably have been hopeless, like the case of the fallen angels, who sinned individually, and fell never to be set up again, but inasmuch as we fell representatively in Adam, it prepared the way for us to rise representatively in the second Adam, Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour. As I fell by another, I can rise by another; as my ruin was caused by the first man, Adam, my restoration can be brought about by the second Man, the Lord from heaven.

*13, 14. (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, ever over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

Infants die, although they have never sinned; they die, because death is the penalty of sin; and as they die for faults not their own, so are the saved by righteousness not their own. They die, for Adam sinned; they live, for Jesus died.

*15-17. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)*

Adam's fall was terribly effectual, it has brought death upon the human race age after age; and Christ's death is wonderfully effectual, for on behalf of all those for whom he died his atonement so prevail as to put their sins away for ever.

**19.** *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

That is the wonderful doctrine of "the gospel of Christ." It is rejected in these evil days; they call it simple, and I know not what beside; but here it is put as plainly as words can put it, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

**20.** *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.*

The law was not given to Moses to stop sin, or to forgive sin, but to make men see how evil sin is, and to make it evident to them how evil they are.

**20.** *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

There was more grace than terror even in the law. It has served a gracious purpose, for it was given to make us realize our guilt, and so might drive us to seek the grace of God for its forgiveness. Salvation is all of grace. Sin cannot conquer grace; it has had a hard struggle for it, but grace will ultimately win the victory in all who believe in Jesus.

**21.** *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The drift of the whole chapter is to comfort believers in the time of trouble by the fact of the great love of God to them in the person of Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour.

## **ROMANS 5**

**1.** *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

These are matters of fact; not of fanatical delusion, but of logical conclusion, for Paul begins with a "therefore." God's people are justified on solid grounds, on reasonable grounds, on grounds that will bear the test even of the last great judgment day. "therefore, being " — now, at the present time, this very moment, — "justified by faith, we have peace:" not only we hope to have it, and trust we shall have it, but we have it. "We have peace," — not only peace of conscience, and peace with our fellow-men, but "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:." Mark that; we have it. O dear people of God, do not be satisfied unless you can talk in this

confident fashion: “therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**2. *By whom also* —**

What! is not that first verse all? Oh, no! there is more to follow. When you get a hold of one golden link of the blessed chain of grace, it pulls up another, and then another, and then another: “By whom also “ —

**2. *We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand,***

We come into this grace by Jesus Christ, and to this heavenly standing, this justified condition, through Jesus Christ who is the door.

**2. *And rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***

Our joy is in the past and the present in some measure, but it is still more in the future: “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” We have three windows. — the one out of which we look back with gratitude upon the past, the one out of which we look with joy in the present, and the one out of which we look with expectation upon the future.

**3. *And not only so,-***

There is for every child of God grace upon grace; every line of the apostle’s writing tells of more blessing: “And not only so.” Is not that enough? Justified, enjoying peace, having access into grace, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; what can there be more? Why, there is something on the road as well as at the end of it: “And not only so,”-

**3. *But we glory in tribulations also: —***

We are not only acquiescent in the divine will; but, tutored by the Spirit of God, we come even to “glory in tribulations also: “ —

**3. *Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; —***

“Knowing.” Paul was no agnostic, he was a “knowing” man, and all God’s people ought to be the same. they are a very dogmatic people when they are what they ought to be; they have nothing to do with “ifs “, and “ands”, and “butt”, and “peradventures”; but they believe and are sure: “Knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” the natural tendency of tribulation is to work impatience, it produces peevishness in many; but where the Spirit of God is, there is a

heavenly counteraction of natural tendencies, and “tribulation worketh patience;” —

**4. *And patience, experience; and experience, hope:***

Again I cannot help observing how we seem to go through one door just to pass through another. We get into a silver chamber that we may go into a golden one; and before we can take stock of all the gold, we are ushered into a gorgeous palace of pearls and rubies and diamonds of priceless value.

**5. *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.***

If you have the Holy Ghost given unto you, then the love of God fills your nature like a sweet perfume. As when the woman broke the alabaster box, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment, so, when the Spirit of God comes, and brings the broken alabaster of the Saviour’s sacrifice, and we feel the love of God poured out among us, what a delightful perfume there is! “thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.” the way to make us love God is for the love of God to be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

**6. *for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.***

Are not these very wonderful words? “Christ died for the ungodly.” Pick out all those who are the naturally good people, and this text has nothing to do with them; but find out the ungodly, the sinful, the wicked, and here is a text exactly suitable for them: “Christ died for the ungodly.”

**7. *for scarcely for a righteous man will one die:***

He is very righteous, but he is very stern; nobody cares much about him.

**7. *Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.***

He is “a good man “ — benevolent, kind, and tender.

**8. *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.***

While we were neither righteous nor good, “while we were yet sinners, Christ” did the most he ever could, or ever can do for us, he “died for us.” this is the best gift for the worst of men, and that best

gift given to them when they are at their worst state: “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

**9.** *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

“Much more.” Paul has been giving us “alsos” and “ands”; now he takes a bigger leap still, for he says, “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” If he saved us when we were sinners, he will certainly save us now that we are justified. If he called us when we were dead, he will not leave us now we are alive.

**10.** *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

You see, there are three points here. When we were enemies, he blessed us; much more, now that we are reconciled, will he do so. If, in the second place, when we were enemies he reconciled us, how much more, after he has reconciled us, will he save us! And, thirdly, if he did all this for us by the death of his Son, much more will he do for us by his life; reconciled by his death, we shall be saved by his life.

**11.** *And not only so,-*

there is no end to the blessing, dear brethren and sisters. the apostle seems to be always going up, and up, and up. this Paul, calm and cool and logical as he is, makes the fire burn most wondrously: “And not only so,” —

**11.** *But we also joy in God —*

We are glad that he is God, glad that he is such a God as he is; we would not wish to have him altered. the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, — the God of the Old testament, and the God of the New testament, — we love him altogether just as he is, and “we joy in God —

**11-21.** *through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned .. (for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the*

*similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. for if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

I have not expounded the latter part of the chapter, as time fades me, and I shall dwell upon it somewhat in the sermon.

This exposition consisted of readings from Jonah 3, 4:1, 2; and Romans 5.

## **ROMANS 5:1, 2**

**1.** *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

My friend, are these words true concerning you? Can you put your finger on this verse, and say, "this is true of me, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have-I have-peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'"? We who have believed in Jesus enjoy that peace, a deep, profound calm is upon our spirit whenever we think of God. We are not afraid of him; we are not afraid to meet him even on his judgment-seat: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Have you peace with God? Are you sure that you have it? If not, mayhap you are not justified by faith, for that is the root of it: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

**2.** *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

This is a golden staircase, justification brings peace, and peace brings access into this grace wherein we are established; and then comes the joy of hope, and that hope fixes its eye on nothing less than the glory of God. Grace is the stepping-stone to glory; and they who are justified by faith shall in due time be glorified by love.

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 4., AND 5:1, 2.

## **ROMANS 5:1-5**

### **1. *Therefore-***

The apostle Paul had the logical faculty largely developed, so his writings are full of “therefores.” And the Christian religion, as a whole, stands logically connected,—doctrine with doctrine, truth with truth. Error is inconsistent with itself, but truth is consistent, logical, and unerring. “Therefore”—

#### **1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:***

Are you enjoying that peace, dear friend, at this moment? if you are, indeed, justified by faith, you are at peace with God. Therefore, know it, and feel no disquietude. Draw near to God as a dear child might to a loving father. “We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:—

#### **2. *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***

When a man is at peace with God, then he has the desire to draw near to him. When he is justified, he has the right to draw near; so that, being justified, and having peace, we have access by faith; and this is not a transient privilege, but the grace into which we have access is a grace in which we stand. We abide in it; the Lord has given us, through our justification, a permanent standing near to himself. “We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and this gives us joy,—the joy of sweet hope concerning the bright future that lies before us: “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

#### **3. *And not only so,—***

Whenever the apostle begins to talk of the Lord’s bounties to his people, he abounds in “also’s” and in “not only so’s? As if he had not said enough already, when he had reminded us of the joy of hope in God’s glory, he says, “And not only so.” We have

something in possession as well as something to hope for; we have a present glory as well as glory laid up in store: “And not only so,”—

**3-5.** *But we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

Beloved, it is a mark of great grace to be able to acquiesce in tribulation, and to accept it with patient resignation at the Lord’s hands; but it is a sign of a still higher state of grace when we glory in tribulation,—when we welcome it and say, “Now, the Lord is about to elevate me to the upper class in his school,—to teach me some deeper truths than I have hitherto learned, to give me a closer acquaintance with some mystery of his kingdom than I have previously had,—to work in my heart some new grace which has never been there before. “We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” You cannot learn to swim on dry land, and you cannot learn to be patient without having something to endure. “Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience.” There are some who think that they will get; experience through tribulation. So they do, in a certain sense; but not experience of the right kind. There is a middle term—patience,—which keeps its right place: “Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience.” I know some people, who have had a thousand troubles, but they have no more experience now than they had when they began; I mean, they are just as foolish,—just as untaught in the things of God,—just as ready as before to blunder into a fresh trouble, because they have lacked that middle term. Then, further Paul says, “and experience, hope.” Our experience of the Lord’s goodness in the past leads us on to hope for still greater things in the future and, thus, experience worketh hope. I have seen some persons, who were called experienced Christians, in whom it seemed to me that experience had worked despair; for their faces were always very long and very sad, and their speech was as dolorous as it well could be. But here I find that true Christian experience worketh hope,—a hope that maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

## **ROMANS 5:1-9**

**1.** *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

We have it tonight. We enjoy it. We delight in it, “through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**2.** *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Not only have we peace, but we get into the favor of God, and we stand in it. This is the grace or favor which comes of being justified. We feel a freedom now to come into our Father’s presence, because he has forgiven us for Christ’s sake. We feel at home with him now though once we were prodigal sons, and had wandered far away, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We have something yet in reserve — present peace, but future perfection. We have present rest, but there still remaineth a rest for the people of God. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

**3-5.** *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

So that even what might seem to be the disadvantages of this present life are made to work into advantages; and what at one time might threaten our prosperity, really conduces to it. Patience, which we never could have if we never had a trouble, is given to us, and experience, which we never could have if we did not patiently endure the trouble, we obtain. We get pearls out of these deep seas. We get treasures out of these blazing furnaces which seem to smelt our blessings, that they may come to us rich and pure. And, above all, there rises a glorious hope, never to be drowned — never to be made ashamed — because we feel the love of God shed abroad in our hearts like a sweet perfume, making every part of our nature fragrant, because the Holy Ghost is there.

**6.** *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

That was our character. There was no good point about us. We were ungodly and we had no strength to mend ourselves or to be

other than ungodly. The strength for reformation had all gone. The strength for regeneration we never had. We were without strength, and then Christ died for us — died for the ungodly.

*7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man*

A benevolent, loving-spirited man.

*7, 8. Some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

And that is the glory of his love. While we were rebels against his government, he redeemed us. While we were far off from him by wicked works he sent his Son to die and bring us near. Free grace, indeed, was this — not caused by anything in us, but springing freely from the great heart of God.

*9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

You see the force of the argument. If he loved us when we were still dead in sin, much more will he keep us and preserve us now that he hath justified us. Were his enemies redeemed? Shall not his friends be kept? Did he love those who were still far off? Will he not love those who are brought near, and love us even to the end?

### **ROMANS 5:1-10**

*1-3. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also:*

Faith has such wondrous power that it makes us rejoice even in trial; it helps Christians to be glad even in the midst of sorrow.

*3. Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; —*

The more trial you have the more spiritual education you receive. You cannot learn the virtue of patience without tribulation, any more than a man can learn to be a sailor if he stops on shore: “Tribulation worketh patience;” —

*4. And patience, experience;*

If you bear the trial patiently, it leaves the mark of its graving tool upon your spirit, and you thus become fashioned into an experienced Christian.

**4. *And experience, hope:***

What God has once done, he may do again; and as he has shown us so much favor we may reasonably hope that he will show us more, and that he who has given us grace will give us glory.

**5. *And hope maketh not ashamed; —***

Our hope brings us courage, no longer are we trembling and diffident, but we feel like children do towards a loving father, we are happily, restfully at home with our God. “Hope maketh not ashamed;” —

**5. *Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.***

When Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed the feet of Jesus with the very costly ointment of spikenard, “the house was filled with the odour” of it, and in a similar fashion the love of God perfumes every part of our nature.

**6. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*”**

What a wonderful statement! “Christ died for the ungodly.” Yet it was no slip of the pen, for the apostle takes up his own expression, and preaches the following little sermon upon it: —

**7. *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:***

If a man is known to be sternly just, like Aristides, nobody would care enough for him to die for him.

**7. *Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.***

For a benevolent man, a true philanthropist, a lover of his race, there are some who might say that they would die for him. Yet the apostle only says, “Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.” It is not very likely, but it is just possible.

**8. *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.***

Certainly we were not “good” men, we were not even “just” men, but we are included in this black description “sinners”; and “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” He died for us as

sinner, he did not come to save saints, but to save sinners; and it was for sinners that he died.

**9.** *Much more than, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

This is a fine piece of argument, and strictly logical. If, when we were sinners, Christ died for us, will he let us be condemned now that he has washed us in his precious blood? Is it possible that, after dying for us, he will let us fall from grace, and perish after all? That will never be. Notice the same kind of argument again: —

**10.** *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

There is a threefold argument here. If Christ died for us when we were his enemies, will he not save us now that we are his friends? If he died to reconcile us to God, will he not completely save us now that this great work has been accomplished? And as we were reconciled to God by Christ's death, shall we not much more be saved by his life? There are three arguments, and each one is sound and conclusive. The believer in Jesus must be eternally saved. If Christ died for sinners, what will he not do for believers, who are no longer enemies, but are reconciled unto God by the death of his Son?

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 5:1-10; AND 2 CORINTHIANS 4; AND 5.

## **ROMANS 5:1-11**

**1.** *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

The gospel is full of "therefores", it is above reason, but it is never against reason; it is the most reasonable thing under heaven "There-fore" — it is a matter of argument. You will have to read the previous chapters to see how this conclusion flows naturally from what he had before taught by the Holy Spirit. Let us linger over these sentences while we read them. "Being justified by faith." Is it so? Art thou indeed made just by faith in Jesus Christ thy Righteousness? Then thou hast peace this day and hour; peace within thine own conscience, and with thy fellow men, but what is much better thou hast peace with God. As soon as we are justified

by reliance on Jesus, we cease to have any quarrel with God, and he has no quarrel with us; we are allies, we are in happy union, we have peace with God. Not shall have it by and by, but we have it now as our present glad possession, because we are justified by faith, we are now in the enjoyment of perfect peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” Since we are at peace with God we may enter his house, his door is open to us, we have divine welcome unto his grace, and we abide in it, abide in it with certainty, and full assurance.

**2.** *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Oh, what a comfort this is, to be rejoicing, especially, to be rejoicing in hope. It is better on before, there may be clouds and darkness here, but we can see the sunlight breaking yonder; “until the day break and the shadows flee away,” we will make hope to be our bright candle of the Lord. We “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and not only so.” When we once get into God’s house, we rise higher in it, we go up another pair of stairs. “Not only so,” though that seems to be enough, to be rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, and to have access into his grace, and to have peace with him because we are justified, but it is not only so, but “we glory in tribulations also.” We transform our troubles into gladness and glorying, we get spiritually enriched by tribulation.

**3, 4.** *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope:*

Another hope, or rather the same hope rising up into another form. We begin with rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God by faith, now we get a further hope which is born of experience; the things we have tasted and handled of the love of God create in us a more radiant hope inferred from what we have enjoyed.

**5, 6.** *And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For where we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

What is the connection here? Is it not this: that the Holy Ghost makes us feel what a wonderful love the love of God is to us

because when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly? Wonderful love! When we were Godless and Christless, in due time Christ died for us.

*7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.*

Nobody would feel impelled to die for a man who is only severely and strictly just, he may command our admiration, but not our affection. Aristides the Just is, indeed, at last banished; men cannot bear a man whose whole character is bare justice, for they are themselves usually so unjust. But “a good man,” he commands our love, a man of that character who is gratuitously kind, and gracious, and benevolent, peradventure — and it is a bare peradventure — somebody might be found to die for such as he. It is not, however, very probable.

*8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

He did the utmost for us when we were the least deserving of it. Oh, what a love is this. Let it be shed abroad in our poor stony hearts, and commended by us to others.

*9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

This is a resistless argument, and should be the deathblow to all misgiving.

If he died for us when we were unjust, will he let us perish now that he has made us just, and completely justified us? Impossible!

*10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

There are three points which strengthen the argument here, which you will readily see by reading it at your leisure. The Lord our God who justified us when we were enemies by the death of his Son, will save us now that we are friends through the life of his Son. “And not only so.” Here we ascend again, it is ever higher and higher, something yet more, so that we are never at the end of this blessed record of mercy and grace.

*11. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

We are at one with God, we are perfectly reconciled to him, and we have at present, at this very moment, a great joy and delight in God. Now we shall read together the 71<sup>st</sup> Psalm, just in order that we may see how good men in all ages have been assisted by their experience and their hope: and how their hope has grown out of their tribulation, their patience and their experience. The old man's psalm. You can recollect it, dear friends, who are aged, by its being 71, it is just past the threescore years and ten.

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 5:1-11; AND PSALM 71:1-14.

## **ROMANS 5:1-11**

### **1. *Therefore being justified by faith,* —**

But why “therefore”? Because of the verge preceding it: “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Christ died to atone for our sins, Christ rose again to secure our justification, “Therefore being justified by faith,” —

### **1. *We have peace with God through our lord Jesus Christ;***

We have peace, we know that we have, we enjoy it, it is not a thing of the future, we have peace, a deep calm like that which came to the disciples when Christ hushed the winds and waves to sleep. “We have peace with God,” his peace has entered into us, we possess it now; but it is all “through our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is all war apart from him, but all peace through him. We poor sinners, being justified by faith, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **2. *By whom also we have access by faith* —**

That is to say, we come near to God; we have the entry of the King's palace; “we have access by faith” —

### **2. *Into this grace wherein we stand,***

With firm foot and confident heart, we stand in God's presence. Happy people!

### **2. *And rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***

What a window hope is! It looks toward heaven; we have only to look out that way, and then we can “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

### **3. *And not only so, but we glory* —**

We hope for glory, — “the glory of God,” and we already “glory.” But in what do we glory? “We glory” —

**3. *In tribulations also:*** —

That is the blackest thing a Christian has, — his tribulations; so, if we can glory in them, surely we can glory in anything. “We glory in tribulations also:” —

**3. *Knowing that tribulation worketh patience;***

A man cannot prove that he has patience if he has never been tried. Christian patience is not a weed, it is a cultivated plant; we only get patience through our trials.

**4. *And patience, experience; and experience, hope:***

You cannot make an experienced Christian without trouble. You cannot make an old sailor on shore, nor make a good soldier without fighting. Here is that window of hope again, standing at the back of our experience, we look out of the window, and what God has done for us is a token of what God will do for us.

**5. *And hope maketh not ashamed;***

Peace gives us courage, hope takes the blush out of the cheek when we confess Christ, for we remember the glory that is to be revealed in him and in us, so how can shame come in?

**5. *Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.***

God’s love is like sweet perfume in an alabaster box; the Holy Spirit breaks that box, pours out the love of God into our souls, and the perfume fills our entire nature.

**6. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.***”

When we had no power to do anything that was good, when we were strengthless and hopeless, then Christ died for us. This is a wonderful gospel expression, which ought to bring comfort to those here who have no pretence of godliness, “Christ died for the ungodly.”

**7. *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:***

However upright and just a man may be, nobody thinks of dying for him.

**7. *Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.***

That is to say, for a generous, kind, noble-hearted man, some might dare to die.

**8.** *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

We were neither righteous nor yet good, yet Christ died for us. “Oh!” said a little boy once to his mother, “I do not think so much of Christ dying for men, I think I would be willing to die if I could save a hundred men by dying.” But his mother said, “Suppose it was a hundred mosquitoes, — would you die for them?” “Oh, no!” he said, “I would let the whole lot of them die.” Well, we were much less, in comparison with Christ than mosquitoes are in relation to men, yet he died for us, good-for-nothing creatures that we are. Well does one say, “God shows part of his love to us in many different ways, but he shows the whole of his love in giving Christ to die for us.” Here you see his heart laid bare, the very heart of God laid open for the inspection of every believing soul. To die for saints would be great love; but to die for sinners, while they are yet sinners, and regarding them as sinners, — this is love with emphasis, the very highest commendation that even divine love can have.

**9.** *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

See; it is a less thing for God to preserve us when we are justified than it is for him to justify us while we are yet sinners. The final perseverance of the saints may well be argued from their conversion, their entrance into glory is guaranteed by the ransom price that Christ has paid for their redemption. He died to save sinners, so how is it possible that he should let saints perish? Oh, no; that can never be! “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

**10.** *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

Notice that while we were his enemies, he blessed us, so now that we are reconciled to him, will he not still bless us? If he reconciled us to him by the death of his son, will he not save us by his life now that we are reconciled to him? Does he make us his friends, intending afterwards to destroy us? Perish such a thought. This verge is like a trident, it is a three-pronged argument for our

eternal safety. I will read it again: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be raved by his life.”

**11.** *And not only so, —*

Surely we have got high enough when we have reached an absolute certainty of our eternal salvation. Yet we are to go still higher: “And not only so,” —

**11.** *But we also joy in God —*

Even now we joy in God, “although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olives shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls,” yet do “we joy in God” —

**11.** *Through our Lord Jesus Christ, —*

Every blessing comes to us through him. How Paul delights to harp upon that string! He says continually, “through our Lord Jesus Christ,” —

**11.** *By whom we have now received the atonement.*

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, we are at one with God, we are reconciled to him by the death of his Son. All our sin is for ever put away we have received the atonement, and we rejoice in the God of our salvation Glory be to his holy name for ever and ever!

## **ROMANS 5:6-11**

**5:6.** *For then we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

What a wonderful sentence that is! Not, “Christ died for the saints, “not, “Christ died for righteous men;” but, “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

**7-9.** *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

What an argument this is for the final safety of believers! If Christ died for us when we were enemies, surely he will give us

now that he has died for us and made us his friends, his reconciled subject”: “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

**10.** *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

There is a threefold argument there. We were enemies, yet God blessed us even then, so will he not bless us even more now that we are reconciled to him? When we were enemies, he reconciled us unto himself. Having done that, will he not certainly save us? We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; so much more shall we be saved by the life of the risen and glorified Jesus, which has almighty, irresistible power.

**11.** *And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 3:9-27; 5:6-11; 8:1-32.

## **ROMANS 5:6-21**

**6.** *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

This is one of the most surprising sentences on record. If it had not been inspired, there are many who would cavil at it. Indeed, many do cavil at it even now, for it is still currently believed that Christ must have died for the righteous. Yet thus is it written: “In due time Christ died for the ungodly.” And this is the commendation of that death, and of the love which suggested it:—

**7.** *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:*

For a merely just man, scarcely would anybody die.

**7.** *Yet peradventure for a good man—*

For a benevolent man—

**7, 8.** *Some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,*

It is under that aspect that Christ is to be regarded as dying for the ungodly, dying for sinners. Ungodly man, guilty sinner, is there not hope for you in this blessed truth? Does anyone say, “I shall be lost, for I am ungodly; I must necessarily perish, for I am a sinner”? Your logic is at fault, dear friend. “Christ died for the ungodly;”

“while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;” therefore, the ungodly,—sinners—be saved because of his death, and all who trust him shall be saved.

**9.** *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

Did he die for us while we were sinners? Will he not, then, surely keep us now that we are Saved? Yes, that he will.

**10.** *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

What an invincible argument this is for the safety of all true believers in Jesus! Did he die for them, and reconcile them unto his Father by his death, when they were enemies? Then, will he not certainly save them now that they are reconciled, seeing that he ever lives to intercede for them? Will he not save them by his life? Assuredly, he will.

**11.** *And not only so,—*

We cannot get to the end of these priceless boons. These precious pearls are too numerous even for the apostle to count, although he was a man who knew how to “reckon” up spiritual treasures: “And not only so,”—

**11-14.** *But we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned—*

Personally—

**14.** *After the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

So that the sin of Adam took effect upon the human race before the law came, and even Upon those who had no personal transgression,—unconscious infants, I mean,—causing them to die.

**15-17.** *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded*

*unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence —*

By Adam's one sin,—the sin of one man,—

**17, 18.** *Death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

That is to say, upon the “all” who are in Christ, as the condemnation came upon the “all” who were in the first Adam. He who believeth not in Jesus has no part in “the free gift unto justification of life;” but he who believeth is a partaker of the glorious justification which comes by Christ.

**19, 20.** *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.”*

It was the practical result of the giving of the law that men became greater sinners than they were before, and it was the design of the law that they should see themselves to be greater sinners than before. The law is the looking-glass in which we see our spots, but it is not the basin in which we wash them away. The law has a provoking power, for such is the perversity of our nature that, no sooner do we hear the command, “You shall not do so-and-so,” than at once we want to do it. Our nature is very much like quicklime. Throw cold water upon it, and straightway it generateth heat; acting, as it were, against the nature of that which is cast upon it. So, the more God says to a man, “Thou shalt,” the more the man says, “I will not;” and the more God says to him, “Thou shalt not,” the more doth the man resolve that he will. “The law entered, that the offence might abound.” It reveals the depravity and disobedience of human nature, and lays us low before God as convicted criminals.

**20.** *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

Blessed be God for that! Sin may be a river, but grace is an ocean. Sin may be a mountain, but grace is like Noah's flood, which prevailed over the tops of the mountains fifteen cubits upward.

**21.** *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Do you know, dear friends, by personal experience, all about this of which we have been reading? I know that many of you do. Would God that all did,—that they understood, by a living faith, what it is to be justified, having first understood, by sorrowful experience, what a sense of condemnation the guilty soul must feel. The Lord bring you all to himself, by Jesus Christ! Amen.

### **ROMANS 5:10-21**

**10.** *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

Grand argument for the safety of all believers having a three-fold edge to it. If he reconciled his enemies, will he not save his friends? If he reconciled us, will he not save us? If he reconciled us by the death, will he not save us by the life of his Son?

**11.** *And not only so,*

The blessings of the covenant of grace rise tier upon tier, mountain upon mountain, Alp on Alp. When you climb to what seems the utmost summit, there is a height yet beyond you. “And not only so” —

**11.** *But we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

Then he begins to explain the great plan of our salvation.

**12.** *Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

In that one man.

**13, 14.** *For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

Children died who had not actually sinned themselves, but died because of Adam’s sin.

**15-17.** *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and*

*the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence—*

By Adams' sin.

**17, 18.** *Death reigned by one: much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment cam upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

All who are in Christ are justified by Christ, just as all who were in Adam were lost and condemned in Adam. The “alls” are not equal in extent—equal as far as the person goes in whom the “alls” were found. And this is our hope — that we, being in Christ are justified because of his righteousness.

**19, 20.** *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered,*

The law of Moses.

**20.** *That the offence might abound, but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

It makes us see sin where we never saw it. It comes on purpose to drive us to despair of being saved by works. It bids us look to the flames that Moses saw, and shrink and tremble with despair.

**21.** *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 116:1-6; ROMANS 5:10-21.

## **ROMANS 6**

**1.** *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

This seems to be a very plausible temptation, it is one which frequently came in the apostle's way, and therefore he very often had to denounce it. It is one of the vilest suggestions of Satan that could possibly come to men.

**2.** *God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

The whole spirit of the gospel is opposed to the idea of sinning because God is gracious. It is a horrible Satanic suggestion, — “As pardon can be so easily obtained from God, let us sin the more against him.” The bare suggestion is utterly degrading and diabolical. It is to be scouted at once.

**3.** *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

Was not that the real meaning of our baptism? Had it any meaning whatever unless we were really dead with Christ and therefore were buried with him?

**4.** *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even as we also should walk in newness of life.*

There is a parallel between Christ and the true Christian. There is a likeness between the Head of the Church and the members of his mystical body. Christ died, and was buried, and his people are reckoned as dead and buried in him.

**5-7.** *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

That is, he that died to sin when Christ died is free from sin’s condemning power.

**8-10.** *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

In the next verse, the parallel between Christ and Christians comes up again. As Christ died, and was buried, and rose from the dead and now lives to die no more, so is it with us who believe in him, and are in him by a vital union. In him we died, and in him we rose, and in him we now live in newness of life.

**11-13.** *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin*

*therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

“Your members” — that is, the various parts of your body and the faculties of your mind are to be yielded up to God “as instruments of righteousness.”

**14.** *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

While you were under the law, and simply heard it command you to do your duty, the command seemed to awaken all the hostility of your nature so that you remained under the dominion of sin, but now no longer does the law speak to you as it did aforetime. You are not now under the law, but another principle governs you. The grace, the favor, the love which God has shown to you in Christ Jesus, appeals to your heart, and you cheerfully yield to it the obedience which, when the law demanded it, your unregenerate spirit refused to render.

**15.** *What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*

Again the apostle is shocked at such a suggestion. There are some who have denied that the law was binding upon them in any sense, and who have therefore claimed liberty to sin, but they can find no footing anywhere within the saved enclosure of God’s Word.

**16.** *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

If, then, a man lives a life of sin, he proves that he is the servant of sin, for he has obeyed its commands, and let that man know assuredly that he has nothing to do with Christ while he is living in sin. But if a man lives in obedience to Christ and seeks after righteousness, and true holiness, that man is evidently the servant of righteousness, and so the servant of God.

**17.** *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*

Or, as the marginal reading renders it, in harmony with the original, “whereto ye were delivered,” for the doctrine was the mould, and ye were the metal, reduced to a molten condition, and then poured into the mould to take the shape of gospel truth. God be thanked for this, — that, though ye did formerly serve sin, ye now serve it no longer.

**18, 19.** *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

How powerfully this plea ought to tell with any whose former life was full of positive, plain uncleanness in the sight of God! And how earnestly should the redeemed spirit cry to God to preserve the body pure and chaste before him!

**20.** *For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*

You did not then trouble yourselves about that matter at all; you left the things of God and piety alone.

**21.** *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.*

You had such pleasure as sin could give you, but was it worth having? You derived some profit, perhaps, from evil pursuits; but did the profit ever make up for the loss which you thereby sustained? O ye who have had experience of sin to the full, has it, after all, turned out to be the fair and lovely thing that it once seemed to be? No, the serpent had azure scales, but its fangs have poured poison into your blood. It came to you with all manner of deceivableness of unrighteousness, like Jezebel with her painted face, but it has wrought for you nothing but sorrow and suffering, and it will work your eternal ruin unless God, in his great mercy, shall prevent it.

**22.** *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

Oh, what wondrous changes the grace of God works! “But now.” Paul must have rejoiced to write those two words. He had dwelt upon what men were before the Lord began to deal with them in mercy, “but now” he could say, “being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

*23. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## ROMANS 6

*1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

If the sinfulness of man has really given an opportunity for the display of divine mercy, then the devil’s logic would be, “Let us commit more sin, that there may be more room for grace to work.” But Christians have learned their reasoning in another school, and to such diabolical arguments they answer in the words of the apostle:

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*2. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

The two terms are exactly opposite to one another. If, through grace, we are dead to sin how can we live in it? If, sinners as we are, we come to Christ to be saved from sin, then it would be a complete misuse of language to talk of being saved from sin, yet still to continue in it. Besides, the apostle goes on to show that the ordinance, by which believers in Jesus are to be admitted into the visible Christian Church will not suffer them to continue in sin.

*3, 4. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

You remember, my brethren and sisters in Christ, that hallowed hour when you went down into the liquid tomb, when, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, you were immersed upon profession of your faith in Jesus Christ. By that solemn act you set forth your death to sin; and when you were raised again out of the

opening element, you thereby made a profession of your faith in Christ's resurrection; and, moreover, you did there and then, seeing that you had received the grace of God in truth, profess to rise unto newness of life. How could you, then, go back to sin? That would be to make your baptism a lie; indeed, you are all of you unbaptized unless you have been baptized into Christ's death.

**5, 6.** *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

God has driven the nails through the active powers of our sin, both hands and feet are fastened to the cross of Christ, and though the heart and the head may sometimes wander, yet our old man is crucified with Christ that the body of sin may be destroyed; and we are looking forward to that happy day when the old man shall be dead altogether, and we shall be made meet to enter into the inheritance of the saints in light. We believe that our old man will never die until we die, but we thank God that the death of our body will be also the death of the body of sin.

**7.** *For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

He can no longer live in it, for he is dead; and if we are really dead in Christ, we can no longer live in sin as we were wont to do.

**8-11.** *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

If Christ could die again, then believers might lose their spiritual life, and there might be such a thing as falling from grace; but while Jesus lies, no member of his mystical body can die. His own promise is "Because I live ye shall live also." He died unto sin once; we do the same. He lives no more to die; we also do the same. Highly privileged are they who are dead with Christ, and blessed is that ordinance in which we set forth our death and burial with him.

**12, 13.** *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as*

*instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

Your legs used to carry you to the theatre; compel them now to carry you to the house of God even though you are weary. Your eyes could look long enough upon wickedness; let not their lids fall when you are sitting to hear a sermon. Let all the members of your body which once served Satan now serve God. Consider that your whole body is a consecrated temple, and be not satisfied unless the whole of it is reserved for the great God himself.

**14, 15.** *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?*

This is another of the Antinomian suggestions that were made in the apostle's time, and that are still made now; and how does Paul answer it? Why, with this solemn adjuration: —

**15-18.** *God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

Is not that a glorious sentence, “Being then made free from sin”? Yes, the fetters are all gone; we have put up our feet upon the block, and the chains have been knocked off; we have put our hands down, and the irons have been broken in pieces. Free from sin! ‘Tis true that sin still tempts us, but it cannot prevail against us; it tries to put the bit in our mouth, and to ride us as once it did, but we no longer submit to its sway. Sin is now an enemy to fret and worry us, but not a king to trample upon us, and rule over us.

**19, 20.** *I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servant of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*

You disdained the silken bonds of piety, you said that you would never wear what you called the iron fetters of grace; you were “Free

from righteousness.” So, surely, now that you are the servants of righteousness, you should seek to be free from sin.

**21-23.** *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## **ROMANS 6**

**1** *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

The fifth chapter ends up in this way, that “where sin abounded, etc... Jesus Christ our Lord.” Then he goes on to say, “What shall we say then?” What inference shall we draw from the fact that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound? Shall we be base enough to draw a wicked inference from a gracious statement? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? It is a horrible suggestion, and yet it is one which has come into the minds of many men, for some men are bad enough for anything; they will curdle the sweet milk of love into the sourest argument for sin. “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.” With all the vehemence of his nature, he saith: —

**2.** *God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

The grace of God makes us dead to sin. This is the grace of God, which delivers us from the power of evil, and if this be so, how can we live any longer therein?

**3.** *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

If we are in Christ at all, we are partakers of his death; and as his was a death for sin and a death to sin, we are made partakers of it; we are really dead because Christ died, and we are in him. Therefore we are dead to the old life, to the old way of sin. We signify that by our baptism.

**4.** *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Our baptism, solemn as it was, was a great acted falsehood, a living pretense, unless we are dead to our former way of living, and have come to live unto God in a new life altogether, by virtue of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

*5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

If we have partaken of his death, we partake also of his rising power. We live because he lives, and we live as he lives, not after the old manner, but in newness of life.

*6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

We are to regard ourselves as persons that have been dead. We are ourselves, it is true; and yet in another sense we are not our own selves. We are not to look upon ourselves as though we owed any kind of service to the power which we obeyed before we knew the Lord. We are new people, we have got a new life, and have entered upon a new existence — the old man is crucified with him

*7, 8. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

There was no getting free from the power of sin, except by dying to it; but, being dead to it, we are free from it; and, now being dead that way, we have entered into a new life that we might live as Christ lives.

*9. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

So we, being raised from our former death, shall die no more; death hath no more dominion over us. That is to say, sin cannot reign in us again; we are dead to it, we are brought into a new life that can never end, even as our Lord Jesus Christ is. There is a parallel between us and Christ, even as there is a union between us.

*10. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

And so do we; we have died unto sin once, but now that we live, we live unto God.

*11, 12. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin*

*therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

It is in the body that it tries to reign. These poor things, these mortal frames of ours, have so many passions, so many desires, so many weak-messes, all of which are apt to bring us under the dominion of sin, unless we watch with great care.

**13.** *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin” — neither eyes, nor ears, nor hands, nor feet, neither suffer any of these to become the tools of sin, “but yield yourselves unto God.” He is ready to use you, lay all the powers of your nature out as tools, for him to use. “Yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.” He is not the God of the dead; he cannot use the dead, but he is the God of the living, and as you profess to have received a new life in Christ, yield up all the faculties of this new life unto the living God, “and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”

**14.** *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

When you were under the law, sin did get dominion over you; that law which was ordained to life, worked towards death. The evil concupiscence of your nature revolted against the command, and led you astray. But now, beloved, it is of love and grace, and now sin cannot get in: stronger motives shall hold you to holiness than ever held you before, and the grace of Go itself, like a wall of fire, shall guard you from the dominion of sin.

**15.** *What then? shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*

That must not be. Again the evil spirit crops up, trying to turn the grace of God into licentiousness, and to make us feel free to sin because of God’s love — that must not be.

**16.** *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

It is a wonderful heart-searching text, is this: let us put ourselves under its power. Whatever you obey, that is your master: and if you obey the suggestions of sin, you are the slave of sin: and it is only as you are obedient to God that you are truly the servants of God. So that, after all, our outward, walk and conversation are the best test of our true condition. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord, nor can. he have any reason to believe that he belongs to God.

*17. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*

Or into which you were delivered. God has taken you, melted you down, and poured you into a new mold. God be thanked for flint; you are not what you used to be. Although you are not what you hope to be, yet you have reason to bless God you are not what once you were-you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine into which you were delivered.

*18. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

The fetters are struck off, the lusts of the flesh do not hold us any longer. We are the Lord's free men, and out of gratitude for this glorious freedom, we become the willing servants of the righteous God.

*19. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

It wants no explanation. In the days of our sin, we sinned with all our power. There was not one part of us but what became the willing servant of sin: and we went from iniquity into iniquity, and now the Cross has made us entirely new, and we have been melted down, poured out into a fresh mold. Now, let us yield every member of our body, soul, and spirit to righteousness, even unto holiness, till the whole of us, in the wholeness and consequently the holiness of our nature, shall be given unto God.

*20. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*

You did not care about righteousness then. When you served sin you felt it was utterly indifferent to you what the claims of righteousness might be. Well, now that you have become the servant of righteousness, be free from sin, let sin have no more dominion over you now, than righteousness used to have when you were the slaves of sin. “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?” What profit did they ever bring you? There was a temporary delight, like the blossom on the tree in spring, but what fruit find you? Did it ever come, to anything? Is there anything to look back upon with pleasure in a life of sin? Oh no, those things whereof we are now ashamed were fruitless to us, “for the end of those things is death.”

*22, 23. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

### **ROMANS 6:1-19**

Paul finishes the last chapter by saying, “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” “What shall we say, then?” What inference shall we draw from the super-abounding of grace over sin?

*1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

“Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” That were very horrible inference. It is one great instance of the shocking depravity of man that the inference has been drawn sometimes, I hope not often, for surely Satan himself might scarcely draw an inference of licentiousness from love. Still, some have drawn it.

*2. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

Now, he goes on by an argument to prove that those in whom the grace of God has wrought the wondrous change cannot possibly choose sin, nor live in it.

*3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

That is the very hinge of our religion. His death, not into his example merely, nor primarily into his life, but “into his death.” In this we have believed — with a dying Saviour we are linked, and our baptism sets this forth. We “were baptized into his death.”

*4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life.*

The operations, therefore, of the Spirit of God forbid that a saved man should live in sin. He is dead; he is raised into newness of life: at the very entrance into the church, in the very act of baptism, he declares that he cannot live as he once did, for he is dead: he declares that he must live after another fashion, for has not he been raised again in the type and raised again in very deed from the dead?

*5, 6. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

There has a death taken place in us, and though there be relics of corruption still alive, yet they are crucified: they will have to die, they must die they are nailed fast to the cross to die in union with the death of Christ.

*7. For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

The man is dead. The law cannot ask more of a criminal than to yield his life. If, therefore, he should live again after death, he would not be one who could suffer for his past offences. They were committed in another life, and “he that is dead is freed from sin.”

*8, 9 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

Or, death will have dominion over him no more: he will never come a second time under death, and neither shall his people. “For in that he died, he died unto sin once.” There was an end of it in the sense of once for all, no second death for Christ.

*10-12. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

Peradventure, there were some who would say that in their spirits truth and righteousness were supreme, but that in their bodies sin had the mastery Aye, but that will not do. There must be left no lurking piece for sin within the complete system of our manhood: it must be hunted out and hunted down thoroughly, out of the body as well as out of the mind.

**13.** *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

We do not, I think, make enough of the passive part of our religion We are often for doing, and quite right, too, and the more active we can be the better; still, before the doing there must come a yielding, because we remember who it is that worketh in us, “both to will and to do of his own good pleasure,” and our activities after all are not so much our own as we deem, if they are right. They are the activities of the divine life within us, of the Spirit of God himself working in us to the glory of the Father. One great point, therefore, is to yield ourselves up, our members, to be weapons in God’s hands for the fighting of the spiritual war.

**14.** *For sin shall not have domination over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

The reigning, ruling principle now, is not “You must, you shall,” for reward, or under fear of punishment, but God has loved you, and now you love him in return and what you do springs from no mercenary or self-serving motive. You are not under law, but under grace; yet in another sense you never were so much under law as you are now, for grace puts about you a blessedly sweet, delightful law, which has power over us as the word of command never had. “I will write my law in their hearts, in their inward parts will I write them.” Aye, that is the glory of the new life, the delight of him who hath passed from death unto life.

**15.** *What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?*

Oh! this old question keeps coming up. Somebody wants to sin. Well, if he wants to sin, why does not he leave this business alone

and go and sin? What has he to do with these theological questions at all? But still, he wants, if he can, to make a coverlet for his wickedness; he wants to enjoy the sweets of the child of God, and yet live like an enemy of God, and so he pops in his head over and over again: "May we not sin because of this or that?" To which the apostle answers again, "God forbid." Oh! may God always forbid it to you, and to me: may the question never be tolerated among us.

**15, 16.** *God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

If you are doing the deeds of sin, you are the servants of sin and only as you are doing the will of God can you claim to be the servant of God. "Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." That becomes the index of our condition. The man, then, that lives in sin and loves it, need not talk about the grace of God he is a stranger to it, for the mark of those that come under grace is this, that they serve God, and no longer serve sin.

**17, 18.** *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

"Bondservants," you have got in our new translation, for so it was, and the apostle seems to excuse himself for using such a word by saying: —

**19.** *I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

As you submitted yourselves to sin most cheerfully and voluntarily, and yet were slaves under it, so now come, and be slaves under Christ with most blessed cheerfulness and delight: endeavor now to lose your very wills in his will, for no man's slavery is so complete as his who even yields his will. Now, yield everything to Christ. You shall never be so free as when you do that, never so blessedly delivered from all bondage as when you absolutely and completely yield yourselves up to the power and supremacy of your Lord.

## ROMANS 7

*1-3. Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress, but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.*

He merely states this as an illustration.

*4. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*

While we were under the law, we could not come into the bonds of the new covenant, — the covenant of grace. But, through the death of Christ, we are dead to the law, and therefore we are set free from the principle and covenant of law, and we have come under the covenant of grace.

*5. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*

Sin is the transgression of the law. Therefore, out of the law, by reason of our corruption, springs sin. And, in our past lives, we did indeed find sin to be very fruitful. It grew very fast in our members, and it brought forth much “fruit unto death.”

*6. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*

No longer is the message to us, “This do, and thou shalt live.” No more are we slaves under bondage; but we have come into a new state, we are free, rejoicing in the glorious liberty of the children of God; and what we now do is done out of a spirit of love, and not of fear. We are not seeking after holiness in order to be saved by it, neither do we seek to escape from sin because we are under any fear of being cast into hell. We have another spirit altogether within us.

*7. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid.*

Nay, so far from being sin, the law is the great detective of sin, discovering it, and letting us know what sin really is.

**7, 8.** *Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.*

Or, “covetousness.” The very fact that God said to us, “Do it not,” wrought upon our nature so that we wanted to do it, and that which God commanded, which was a matter of indifference to us while we were in ignorance of his will, became, by reason of the depravity of our hearts, a thing to be resisted just because he had enjoined it upon us. Ah, me! what wicked hearts are ours that fetch evil even out of good!

**8, 9.** *For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

“I did not know how sinful I was until God’s commandment came to me.

Sin seemed to be dead within me, and I thought myself a righteous man; but when the law of God came home to my heart and conscience, and I understood that even a sinful thought would ruin me, that a hasty word had the essence of murder in it, and that the utmost uncleanness might lurk under the cover of what seemed a mere custom of my fellow-men, — when I found out all this, sin did indeed live, but I died so far as righteousness was concerned.”

**10-13.** *And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid.*

“If I sinned the more when God’s commandment was revealed to me; and if, by the light of the law, sin was made more apparent to me, and became so exceeding sinful that it drove me to despair, and so to commit still worse sin; the fault was not in the law, but in sin, and in me, the sinner.”

**13, 14.** *But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual:*

The law of the Lord is a far higher thing than it seems to be in the esteem of many people. Talk not of it as a mere “declogue.” It has far-reaching hands, and it affects the secret thoughts and purposes of men, and even their stray imaginations come under its supremacy. “The law is spiritual.”

**14.** *But I am carnal, sold under sin.*

“I am carnal.” There is the source of all the mischief, — a disobedient and rebellious subject, not an irksome law. The law is good enough, it is absolutely perfect; “but,” says the apostle, “I am carnal,” — fleshly, — “sold under sin.”

**15.** *For that which I do I allow not:*

The man himself does that which is evil, but his conscience revolts against it.

**15.** *For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

This is a strange contradiction, — a man who has grace enough to will to do good, and yet does it not. There are two men in the one man, — the new nature struggling against the old nature. This must be a renewed man who talks in this fashion, or else he could not say that he hated sin; yet there must be a part of him still imperfect, or else he would not do that which he hates.

**16.** *If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.*

“If I do that against which and my conscience rebel, so far, the better part of me owns the goodness of the law, though the baser part of me rebels against it.”

**17.** *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

The renewed man still stands out against sin. His heart is not wishful to sin, but that old nature within him will sin even to the end.

**18, 19.** *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

Oh, how often have men, who have been struggling after holiness, had to use these words of the apostle! The more holy they become, the more they realize that there is still a something better beyond them, after which they struggle, but to which they cannot yet

attain; so still they cry, “The good that we would we do not: but the evil which we would not, that we do.”

**20.** *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

The true man — the newborn man — is struggling after that which is right. The real “I”, the immortal “ego”, is still pressing forward, like a ship beating up against wind and tide, and striving to reach the harbor where it shall find perfect rest. Oh, what struggles, what contentions, what rightings, there are within the men and women in whom the grace of God is working mightily! Those who have but little grace can take things easily, and swim with the current; but where grace is mighty, sin will fight for the mastery, though it must yield ultimately, for there can never be any true peace until it is subdued.

**21.** *I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*

Speaking for myself, I can say that, often, when I am most earnest in prayer, stray thoughts will come into my mind to draw me off from the holy work of supplication; and when I am most intently aiming at humility, then the shadow of pride falls upon me. Do not gracious men generally find it so? If their experience is like that of the apostle Paul, or like that of many another child of God whose biography one delights to read, it is so, and it will be so.

**22-24.** *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

These are birth-pangs, the throes and anguish of a regenerated spirit. The Christian man is fighting his way to sure and certain victory; so, the more of this wretchedness that he feels, the better, if it be only caused by a consciousness that sin is still lurking within him, and that he longs to be rid of it.

**25.** *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 7., AND 8:1-4.

## **ROMANS 7:7-25**

This is Paul's own account of his inward conflicts. He longed to conquer sin. He wanted to become a free man, and live always a godly and holy life, but he found that there was a battle within his nature.

*7. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

There are some who hope to overcome their evil propensities by the law. They think that if they can know and feel the authority of the law of God, that will have an awe over their minds, and they shall become holy. Now the law is in itself supremely holy. It cannot be improved. We could not add to it, or take from it without injuring it. It is a perfect law. But what is its effect upon the mind? When it comes into an unrenewed mind, instead of checking sin, it causes sin. The apostle says that he not known lust, except the law had said, "Thou shalt not covet." There is a something about us which rebels against law the moment we come to it. There are some things we should never think of doing if we were not prohibited from them, and then there becomes a tendency at once in this vile nature of ours to break the law.

*8. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.*

If there had never been any law, there could not have been any sin, because sin is a breaking of law. The law is good. We are not speaking about that. The law is necessary, but, still such is our nature that the very existence of law argues and creates the existence of sin. And when the law comes, then sin comes immediately. "Without the law sin was dead."

*9. For I was alive without the law once;*

I thought that I was everything that was good. I imagined that I was doing everything that was right. I felt no rebellion in my heart. I was alive.

*9. But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

I kicked at that commandment. My holiness was soon gone. The excellence which I thought I had in my character soon vanished for I found myself breaking the law.

**10-13.** *And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But, sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good: that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*

There was sin in his nature, but he did not know it. But when the commandment came, then that evil nature said, "I won't keep that commandment," and it took occasion at once to show itself by breaking that commandment. It was something like a medicine which many a wise physician has given to his patient. There is a deadly disease in the internals of the man, and he gives him a medicine that throws it out. You see it on the skin. You feel the pain of it. It would have been his death anyhow. It can only be his death now; but now it is a part of the process of the cure to bring the disease where it can be seen. And so the law comes into a man's heart, and because of the rebellion of his nature, he kicks against the law and sins. It does not make him sinful. It only shows that he was sinful, for a perfect law would not make a perfect man sin. It would lead and guide him in the way of holiness. But a perfect law coming into contact with an imperfect nature soon creates rebellion and sin. It is an illustration that is not good throughout, but still it is of some use. You have seen quicklime; and you throw water on it. The water is of a cooling nature. There is nothing in the water but that which would quench fire, and yet when it is thrown upon the lime the consequence is a burning heat. So is it with the law cast upon man's nature. It seems to create sin. Not that the law does it of itself, but, coming into contact with the vicious principles of our nature, sin becomes the product of it. It is the only product. You may preach up the law of God till everybody becomes worse than he was before. You may read the ten commandments till men learn what to do in order to provoke God. The law does not create holiness. It never can.

**14.** *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal,  
Fleshly.*

**14.** *Sold under sin.*

Even now that I have become a Christian and am renewed by grace.

**15.** *For that which I do I allow not:*

I often do that which I do not justify, which I do not wish to do again, which I abhor myself for doing.

**16.** *For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

This is the believer's riddle. To say that this is not a believer's experience is to prove that the man who says it does not know much about how believers feel. We hate sin, and yet, alas! alas! we fall into it! We would live perfect lives if we could, we that are renewed. We make no justification for our sin: it is evil and abominable; yet do we find these two things warring and fighting within.

**16.** *If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.*

My inmost heart, says the law, is good, though I have not kept it as I wish I had, yet my very wish to keep it is the consent of my nature to goodness of that law, and proves that there is a vitality about me which will yet throw out the disease, and make me right in the sight of God.

**17.** *Now then it is no more I that do it,*

The real "I," the true "I," the new-born "ego." Thank God for that—to have a will to do good, to have a strong, passionate desire to be holy. "To will is present with me."

**17.** *But sin that dwelleth in me.*

I would be earnest in prayer, and my thoughts are distracted. I would love God with all my heart, and something else comes in and steals away a part of it. I would be holy as God is holy, but I find myself falling short of my desires. So the apostle means.

**18-20,** *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me: but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it,*

The true and real "I."

**20.** *But sin that dwelleth in me.*

Oh! this accursed indwelling sin! Would God it were driven out. We do not say this to excuse ourselves—God forbid—but to blame

ourselves that we permit this sin to dwell within us. Yet must we rejoice in God that we are born again, and that this new “I” the true “I,” will not yield to sin, but fights against it.

**21.** *I find then a law,  
Or rule.*

**21-24.** *That, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

Now, the more holy a man gets the more he cries in this fashion. While he is low down in the scale, he puts up with sin, and he is uneasy, but when he gets to see Christ and get somewhat like him, the more nearly he approximates to the image of his Master, the more the presence of the least sinful thought is horrifying to him. He would, if he could, never look on sin again—never have the slightest inclination to it, but he finds his heart getting abroad and wandering when he would tether it down, if he could, to the cross and crucify it there. And so the more happy he is in Christ the more desperately does he cry against the wretchedness of being-touched with sin, even in the least degree. “Oh! wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

**25.** *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

It will be done. I shall be delivered. I shall be perfect.

“Oh, blissful hour! oh, sweet abode!

I shall be near and like my God.”

Oh! to be without fault before the throne, without tendency to sin without the possibility of it, immaculately clean, with a heart that sends forth pure waters like the river of life that flows from beneath the throne of God! This is our portion. We are looking for it, and we will never rest until we get it, blessed be his name. “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

**25.** *So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God;*

With the new mature.

**25.** *But with the flesh the law of sin.*

With the flesh—this old rubbishing stuff that must die and be buried, and the sooner the better. With my old corrupt nature I serve the law of sin. But what a mercy it is that the next verse is, that, notwithstanding that, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 51. AND ROMANS 7:7-25.

## ROMANS 8

*1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

“No condemnation”: that is the beginning of the chapter. No separation: that is the end of the chapter. And all between is full of grace and truth. What a banquet this chapter has often proved to the souls of God’s hungry servants! May it be so now as we read it. No condemnation even now. Many doubts, but no condemnation. Many chastisements, but no condemnation. Even frowns from the Father’s face apparently, but no condemnation. And this is not a bare statement, but an inference from powerful arguments. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” This is where they are. “Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” This is how they behave themselves, not under the government of the old nature, but under the rule of the divine Spirit of God.

*2-4. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.*

None keep the law so well as those who do not hope to be saved by it, but who, renouncing all confidence in their own works, and accepting the righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ Jesus, are moved by gratitude to a height of consecration and a purity of obedience which mere legalism can never know. The child will obey better without desire of reward, than the slave will under the dread of the lash, or in hope of a wage. The most potent motive for holiness is free grace. A dying Saviour is the death of sin. As we

have been singing, we strove against its power until we learnt that Christ was the way, and then we conquered it.

**5.** *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

Everything according to its nature. Water will rise as high as its source, but it will not naturally flow any higher. The great thing, then, is to be brought under the dominion of the Holy Spirit, and of that new nature which is the offspring of the Spirit. Then we try to rise up to our source, and we rise vastly higher than human nature ever can under any force that you can apply to it. The new nature can do what the old nature cannot do.

**6.** *For to be carnally minded*

To have the mind of the flesh.

**6.** *Is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Flesh must die. Its tendency is to corruption; but the spirit never dies. Its tendency, its instinct, is growth, advance, immortality.

**7.** *Because the careful mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

The old nature is hopelessly bad. There is no mending it. It is enmity, not merely at enmity; but it is absolutely enmity. It is not subject to God's law, and you cannot make it so.

**8.** *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

So long as we are under the dominion of the old nature, the depraved and-fallen nature, there is no pleasing God.

**9.** *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.*

Oh! this is a very wonderful fact, that the Spirit of God should dwell in us. I have often said to you that I never know which of two mysteries most to admire — God incarnate in Christ, or the Holy Spirit indwelling in man; they are two marvelous things, miracles of miracles.

**9, 10.** *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

The regeneration of the body, so to speak, is not performed in this life; Resurrection is tantamount to that. The body is still under the old law of death, and so we have pain and weakness, and we die;

but the spirit, oh! how it triumphs, even in the midst of pain and weakness. “The Spirit is life, because of righteousness.” That will not die.

**11.** *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

So there is coming a time for your body to experience the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. He does not say that he will give you a new body. Do not believe this modern doctrine. But he shall quicken your mortal body; that is to say, the same body, which is now subject to death, and so is mortal, is to be quickened at the resurrection.

**12.** *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh*

What do we owe the old nature? Nothing, surely. Give it a decent burial. Let it be buried with Christ in baptism. Let the Spirit of God come and renew it. But we owe it nothing, and we are not debtors to it.

**13, 14.** *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

Your “universal fatherhood” is rubbish. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,” and none others. This is the essential to sonship — that we should have the Spirit of God within us.

**15, 16.** *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

That is, when we have the Spirit, when we are renewed in the Spirit of our minds, when we come into the domain of Spirit, and quit the tyranny of the flesh. Then the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

**17.** *And if children, then heirs;*

It is not, of course, so in human families. All children are not heirs; but it is so in the family of God.

**17.** *Heirs of God,*

What a heritage! God himself becomes our heritage. We are heirs to all that God has, and all that God is.

**17.** *And joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

The whole chapter is rather too long for our reading, so we will pass on to the 28<sup>th</sup> verse.

**28.** *And we know*

This is not a matter of opinion. This is scarcely a matter of faith. "We know." We are sure of it. We have proved it.

**28.** *That all things work together for good to them that love God,*

They all work. They work in harmony. They work for one purpose. That purpose is for good.

**28.** *To them who are the called according to his purpose.*

That is their private character, which God knows, and which he reveals to them in course of time.

**29.** *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.*

This is their character, which they perceive, which others may in a measure perceive. We are to be like him then, conformed to his image; and if we be joint-heirs with him, what a joy it is that we are to be partakers of his nature, made like to him! Christ will be reflected, and in a measure repeated, in all his people; and this shall be the very glory of heaven, that, look which way you will, you shall see either Christ himself or his likeness in his people. If you have ever stood in a room that was full of mirrors everywhere, how wonderfully your own likeness has been repeated! And heaven shall be a mirror chamber, wherein Christ shall be seen in every one of his people. He did predestinate them to be conformed to the image of his Son.

**30.** *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?*

That glorification we cannot see as yet. It is in the excessive brightness of the future, just as his divine election is in the brightness of the past. These are the two columns on either shore; but the swinging bridge in between is this — calling and

justification. These are joined in one, stud if thou hast either of these, thou mayest know thy predestination and thy future glorification

**31.** *What shall we then say to these things?*

Oh! have you not often said that? When you have studied the plan of grace, the covenant of God, have you not said to yourself, “What can I say to all this? It is passing wonder; It exceeds the power of comprehension, for the greatness of this glory. What shall we then say to these things?” Well, we will say something practical that shall cheer our hearts.

**31-33.** *If God be for us who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.*

It may be read, “God that justifieth?” and properly may be read as a question.

**34.** *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died,*  
He is the Judge. Will he who died condemn?

**34.** *Yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

He alone is Judge. Has he done all this, and will he condemn us?

**35.** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

These have been tried on the saints for ages.

**36.** *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

But has this divided them from Christ? Hear them all, as with united voice they answer.

**37, 38.** *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded,*

Somebody asked, “Pray, what persuasion may you be?” Well, this is my persuasion.

**38.** *That neither death, nor life, nor angels,*  
Good or bad.

**38.** *Nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present,*

Hard and grinding as they may be.

**38.** *Nor things to come.*

Unknown mysteries dreaded.

**39.** *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## **ROMANS 8:1-4**

**1.** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Some people talk about “getting out of the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, into the 8<sup>th</sup>.” But who made this into an eighth chapter? Certainly, the Holy Spirit did not. There are no chapters in the Epistle as he inspired Paul to write it, the whole of it runs straight on without a break: “Therein therefore now no condemnation” — while struggling, fighting, warring, contending, —

**2.** *For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

“Hath made me free” — that is, the real “I” of which he wrote a little while before — the true man himself: “‘The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.’ I have broken its bonds, I am a free man. Contending against its usurpation, I have escaped from under its yoke, and I shall yet tread sin under my feet, and God shall bruise even Satan himself under my feet shortly.”

**3.** *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*

That he has done most effectually.

**4.** *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Oh, what a blessed thing it is to walk, freely, “not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” even though, all the while, there is, within the soul, this strife that the apostle has been describing!

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 7., AND 8:1-4.

## **ROMANS 8:1-9**

**1.** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

My hearers, we are each of us, by nature, under the condemnation of God. We are not only subject to condemnation, but we are condemned already; and, on account of sin, there is judgment recorded in God's book against every one of us, considered in our fallen state. But if we "are in Christ Jesus," if we are made partakers of Jesus, if we have hidden ourselves in the cleft of the rock, Christ, and if our trust is solely in him, oh, precious thought, "there is therefore now no condemnation" for us. It is blotted out. The old judgment that was recorded against us is now erased; and in God's book of remembrance there is not to be found a single condemnatory syllable, nor one word of anger written against any believer in Christ Jesus. Glorious freedom from condemnation! How may I know whether I have been thus set free? This is the question that should enter into each of our hearts. The answer is: "Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." My hearers, after which of these are you and I walking? Are we following the flesh? Are we seeking to please ourselves, to indulge our bodies, to gratify our lusts, to satisfy our own inclinations? If so, we are not in Christ Jesus; for those who are in Christ Jesus "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," and every one of you who is fleshly and carnal is not in Christ, but is still under condemnation.

**2, 3.** *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*

He did accomplish it. The law could not condemn sin so truly and so thoroughly as God did when he condemned sin in the person of Christ. O believer, let not thy sins grieve thee, - however great or however tremendous they may have been; weep over them, but do not be distressed about them, for they have been condemned in Christ Jesus. They may have been enormous, but if thou art in him, Christ was punished for thee, and God's justice asks not for a second punishment for one offence. Christ offered once a complete atonement for all believers, and if I am a believer in him, there is no possible fear of my ever being condemned. There cannot be; for

Christ was condemned for me, my sins were laid upon his head; and in the awful moment when he sustained the stroke of his Father's vengeance, those sins ceased to be; and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

4. *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Mark, again, how Paul brings us to this as the great evidence of our being in Christ Jesus,-the not walking after the flesh. Now, every man, as he is born into the world, left to himself, is sure to "walk after the flesh." It is only the man who has the Spirit of God put into his soul, who has the heavenly gift from on high, who will "walk after the Spirit." It is not talking after the flesh, but it is walking after it, that condemns us, and it is not talking after the Spirit that will save us, it is walking after the Spirit that is the evidence of salvation; not talking, but walking. How many of you are there who are talkatives, who can talk religion, and give us as much as we like of it, but whose life and conversation are not such as become godliness! "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If ye sow to the flesh, ye "shall of the flesh reap corruption," but if ye sow to the Spirit, ye "shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

5-7. *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God:*

That mind with which we are all born is enmity against God, and however much refined or polished a man may be, however amiable or polite, however he may shine amongst his fellow-creatures, if he has not had a new heart and a right spirit, he is at "enmity against God," and he cannot enter heaven until there has been a divine change wrought in him. Some of you suppose because you have never been guilty of any vice, because you have not indulged in any great transgression, that therefore you do not require the work of regeneration in your hearts. You will be mightily mistaken if you continue under that delusion until the last great day. "For to be carnally minded," even though that carnal mind is in a body that is dressed in silks and satins, "To be carnally minded is death," even though it be whitewashed till it looks like a spiritual one. "To be

carnally minded,” even though you sow the carnal mind with a few good garden seeds of the flowers of morality, will still be nothing but damnation to you at the last. “To be carnally minded is death;” only, “to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God:”

*7. For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

The opponents of the free-grace gospel, which it is our delight to preach, assert that men can be saved, if they will, and that men most certainly can repent, and can believe, and can come to God of their own free will, and that it is not through any defect in any powers that they have if they are not saved. Now, we are not over prone to controvert that point; but, at the same time, we do not understand the meaning of this verse if what they say is correct. It says here, “The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Some say that men could repent if it were their inclination. Exactly so; but that is what we assert,-that it never will be and never can be their inclination, except they are constrained to do so by the grace of God. Rowland Hill uses a very singular and odd metaphor in his “Village Dialogues.” Two parties are speaking together on this subject, and one of them, pointing to the cat sitting on the hearth says, “Do you see that cat? She sits there, and licks her paws, and washes herself clean.” “I see that,” said the other. “Well,” said the first speaker, “did you ever hear of one of the hogs taken out of the sty that did so?” “No,” said he. “But he could if he liked,” said the other. Ah, verily, he could if he liked; but it is not according to his nature, and you never saw such a thing done, and until you have changed the swine’s nature, he cannot perform such a good action; and God’s Word says the same of man. We do not care about fifty thousand aphorisms, or syllogisms, or anything else; God’s Word against man’s any day. Jesus said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” Men cannot come to Jesus, unless the Father draws them to him. We assert that, from first to last, the work of salvation is all of grace; and we are not afraid of any licentious tendency of that doctrine, or anything of the kind. God’s Word, in all its simplicity, must be preached, and we leave him to take care of his own truth. Blessed be God, this humbling truth is of far more use than the other doctrine, which puffs men up with pride, telling them

that they can perform what most assuredly they cannot do. "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

**8.** *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

No man "in the flesh" can please God. Oh, what a sword this is,- a sharp two-edged sword against many of you, my friends! Some of you who regularly attend this house of prayer, and others of you who stray in here in the evening, you "are in the flesh," and you "cannot please God." Perhaps you have been attempting to do it. You have said, "I will attend the house of prayer regularly." You cannot please God by doing that, so long as you are "in the flesh." You may be as moral as you please, and we beseech you so to be; but unless you have the Spirit of God unless you are really changed in heart, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus, all that you can do, as long as you are "in the flesh, cannot please God." Virtues, in unregenerate men, are nothing but whitewashed sins. The best performance of an unchanged character is worthless in God's sight. It lacks the stamp of grace upon it; and that which has not the stamp of grace is false coin. Be it ever so beautiful in model and finish it is not what it should be. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot praise God."

**9.** *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any may have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

O beloved, we have need each of us to put ourselves in this scale! Come, preacher, be not too sure of thine own salvation. Come, church-member, do not be too certain of thine own regeneration. Come, Christian, put thyself in this scale: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." If he has not the Holy Ghost really dwelling in him, guiding him, directing him, teaching him, comforting him, supporting him, he is none of Christ's. And if we do not exhibit the Spirit of Christ in our character,-if we have not gentleness, meekness, purity, holiness, benevolence, we are none of Christ's. Ah, this will take some of your flimsy Christians to pieces. Half of your professors, we fear, will at the last be found not to have had "the Spirit of Christ." It is one thing to profess religion, beloved, it is quite another thing to possess vital godliness. We may sit down at the communion table, but oh! if we never had the Spirit of Christ, we "are none of his."

We may plead our own goodness before the throne of God at the last; but Jesus Christ will say, "You have not my Spirit; you are none of mine;" and then, however much we may have striven to serve God, unless we have the Spirit of Christ, there shall be nothing for us but the fearful curse, "Depart! depart! depart!" "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Let us ask him for his Spirit; let us plead with him for his grace; and though some of you have never had it, yet if you now ask for it, our God is a gracious God, full of mercy, and exceedingly pitiful; whosoever calleth upon his name shall be saved; and though the chief of sinners, if you sincerely ask for pardon and for grace, you shall receive it at his hand. The Lord help you so to pray, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 66.; AND ROMANS 8:1-9.

### **ROMANS 8:1-14**

This wonderful chapter is the very cream of the cream of Holy Scripture. What a grand key-note the apostle strikes in the first verse!

**1.** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

"No condemnation" — that is the first note of the chapter. In the last verse it is "no separation." What glorious music there is here, — no condemnation to those who are in Christ, no separation of them from Christ! Happy are the people who have a share in this double blessing, and unhappy are the men and women who know nothing of it. We will read it again: "There is therefore now no condemnation, "There is a great deal of accusation, and a great deal more of tribulation, but there is no condemnation not the least hint of it. Some condemnation we might have expected, but "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

**2.** *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

I have broken away from its thralldom; the new law, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the law of grace has set me free from the domination of the law of sin and death. Happy is the free man who is thus liberated by the grace of God.

**3.** *For what the law could not do, —*

God has done by his grace: “What the law could not do,” —

**3.** *In that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, —*

Or, as the marginal reading renders it, “by a sacrifice for sin,” —

**3-5.** *Condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;*

Unregenerate men, the men who remain in the state in which they were born, the men who allow their lower nature to have the predominance, “they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.” That is all that they care about, all that they think about, all that they toil for, all that they really “mind.”

**5.** *But they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

Those in whom there is a new life begotten by the Holy Ghost — these mind the things of the Spirit. Each nature seeks its own things, — the flesh seeks the things of the flesh, the spirit seeks the things of the Spirit. Judge ye, my hearers, to which case ye belong by this test, — for what are you living? That which you live for is the true index of your nature. Do you mind spiritual things or the things of the flesh?

**6, 7.** *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

The old nature never will obey the law of God; it never can do so. What then is to be done with it? Improve it? Nay, my brethren, the only thing to be done with it is to let it die, and then to bury it. In baptism you have a most significant symbol of what is to be done with the flesh; you are to treat it as a dead thing, and therefore to bury it. Let the old life be crucified and put to death with Christ, and let the new life take its place.

**8.** *So then they that are in the flesh —*

Those who are still in the old nature, living for it, living to it, —

**8.** *Cannot please God.*

Men may wash this old nature, they may clothe it, they may decorate it, they may educate it, but there is no evolution which can

produce grace out of nature. The child of nature may be finely dressed, but it is a dead child however gaudily it is attired. There is a vital eternal difference between the old nature and the new.

**9.** *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.*

Ye saints of Rome to whom Paul was writing, and ye who believe in Christ now: “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.”

**9.** *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

If Christ’s Spirit has not quickened you, you do not belong to Christ. Some ministers preach a very general sort of gospel in which everybody has a share, but the Bible knows nothing of that sort of gospel. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Do you know what it is to have the Spirit of Christ? If not, my hearer, do not deceive yourself you are none of his. “If any man” — be he prince or magistrate, a member of Parliament or a doctor of divinity, — “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

**10.** *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

Hence the body suffers, the body is sick, the body decays, the body is under the dominion of death because of sin, but the Spirit is full of life because of righteousness.

**11.** *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

You believers may have a good hope concerning your bodies: “He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies.” Wait a while, therefore; what God has done for your souls he will in due time do for your bodies also. This should make you long for the day of Christ’s appearing, as Paul says in the 23<sup>rd</sup> verse of this chapter, “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,” when Christ shall appear, and we shall be raised — “From beds of dust and silent clay,” — the body itself born a second time, regenerate like the soul.

**12.** *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*

We owe the flesh nothing; I mean the law of sin in our members, we owe nothing to that. It has been a curse and a plague to us; we are not debtors to the flesh, so we must not “live after the flesh.”

**13.** *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die:*

If you live simply to gratify your ambition, if you live for avarice, if you live to please yourself, if you live for any earthly object which can be comprised under the term “after the flesh,” you will certainly be disappointed, for you will die, and your hope will die with you.

**13.** *But if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

If you seek, by the Holy Spirit’s power, to kill sin, if you try to crush all sinful desires, if you keep evil with a rope about its neck, if you mortify it put it to death, then you shall live. Holiness is the mode of the Christian; life, sin is the way of the sinner’s death

**14.** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

## **ROMANS 8: 1-22**

This precious chapter reminds us of the description of the land of Havilah, “where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good.”

**1.** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,*

There is no condemnation to them; that is gone, and gone for ever. Not only is part of it removed, but the whole of it is gone: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” This is their legal status before God,—in Christ Jesus, without condemnation; and this is their character:—

**1.** *Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Their daily conversation is according to their new spiritual nature, and according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and not according to their fleshly nature, and the guidance of self and Satan.

**2.** *For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

“It cannot any longer rule me; and it cannot now condemn me. I am free from it, for I am now under the new and higher ‘law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.’”

**3, 4.** *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

If there are any men in the world who do keep the law of God, they are the very persons who do not hope to be saved by the keeping of it, for they have by faith found righteousness in Christ, and now by love and gratitude are put under the power of the law of the spiritual life in Christ, and they so live, by God’s grace, that they do manifest the holiness of the law in their lives.

**5.** *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;*

They care for nothing else: they are satisfied so long as their appetites are gratified. They are of this world, and the things of this world fill them to the brim.

**5.** *But they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

Spiritual joys, spiritual hopes, spiritual pursuits,—these belong only to those who are spiritual.

**6.** *For to be carnally minded—*

To be fleshly minded

**6.** *is death;*

That is what it comes to, for the flesh comes to death at last; and, after death, it goes to corruption. If we live after that carnal fashion, this will be the end of our living: “death.”

**6.** *But to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

For the spirit will never die, and the spirit has that within it which will bring it perfect peace.

**7, 8.** *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Those that have never been born again, so as to be “in the Spirit,” are still just as they were born “in the flesh,” so they cannot please God. Do what they may, there is an essential impurity about their nature so that they cannot be well pleasing unto God. We must

be born again, we must become spiritual by the new birth which is wrought by the Holy Spirit, or else it is impossible for us to please God. O you who are trying your best to please God apart from the new birth, and apart from Christ, see how this iron bar is put across your path: “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Go then to him, and ask him to give you of his Spirit, that you may be spiritual, and no longer carnal.

**9.** *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

It does not matter what he calls himself; he may be a preacher, he may be a bishop; but if he has not the Spirit of Christ, “he is none of his;” and if he has the Spirit of Christ, though he may be the most obscure person on earth, he belongs to Christ.

**10.** *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin;*

The grace of God has not changed that body; it still remains earth, dust, worms’ meat, and it must die unless Christ should come, and transform it by his coming. “The body is dead because of sin;” and hence come those aches and pains, that heaviness, that weariness, that decay, those infirmities of age which we experience so long as we bear about with us this body of death.

**10.** *But the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

There is a living power within us which triumphs over this dying, decaying body. So we rejoice notwithstanding all our afflictions, trials, and depressions.

**11.** *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

There is to be an emancipation even for this poor flesh, a translation and a glory for it yet in Christ.

**12.** *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*

Certainly not, for we owe the flesh nothing. It keeps us down and hampers us, it is a hindrance to us, but we certainly owe it nothing; so let us not be subservient to it, let us not consult or even consider it, and especially let us never come under its fatal bondage.

**13.** *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die:*

It is a dying thing, and “ye shall die” if ye live after its dying fashion..

**13.** *But if ye through the Spirit—*  
That living, immortal power—

**13, 14.** *Do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God:*

Oh, high dignity and blessed privilege! As soon as ever we get away from the dominion of the flesh, and come to be led by the Spirit of God, and so become spiritual men, we have the evidence that we are the sons of God, for “God is a Spirit,” so his sons must be spiritual.

**15.** *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;*

We did have it once, and it wrought some good effect upon us for the time being; when we were under the Law, we felt ourselves to be in slavery, and that made us go to Christ for liberty.

**15.** *But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

Oh, blessed, blessed state of heart to feel that now we are born into the family of God, and that the choice word which no slave might ever pronounce may now be pronounced by us, “Abba”! It is a child’s word, such as a little child utters when first he opens his mouth to speak, and it runs the same both backwards and forwards, -AB-BA. Oh to have a childlike spirit that, in whatever state of heart I am, I may still be able to say, in the accents even of spiritual infancy,” Abba, Father”!

**16.** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God :*

What better testimony can we have than that of these two witnesses, first of our own spirit, and then of the Holy Spirit himself, “that we are the children of God”? Note that this is not spoken concerning everybody. The doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God in a doctrine of the flesh, and not of the Spirit; it is not taught anywhere in God’s Word. This is a Fatherhood which relates only to those who are spiritual; we are born into it by the new birth, and brought into it by an act of grace in adoption. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God;” this is a special privilege that belongs only to those who are spiritual.

**17, 18.** *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Do we suffer now? Then let us wait for something better that is yet to come. Yes, we do suffer, and in this we are in accord with the whole creation of God, for the whole creation is just now, as it were, enduring birth pangs. There is something better coming; but, meanwhile, it is troubled and perplexed, moaning and groaning.

**19-22.** *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

See how it often weeps in the superabundant rain that seems like a minor deluge. Note how, at times, creation's very bowels seem to be tossed and torn with pain and agony by volcanoes and earthquakes. Mark the tempests, tornadoes, hurricanes, and all kinds of ills that sweep over the globe, leaving devastation in their track; and the globe itself is wrapped in swaddling bands of mist, and shines not out like its sister stars in its pristine brightness and splendour. The animal creation, too, wears the yoke of bondage. How unnecessarily heavy have men often made that yoke!

## **ROMANS 8:1-31**

**1.** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

To my mind one of the sweetest words of that verse is that little word now.

“There is, therefore, now no condemnation” — at this very moment.

Walking under the power of the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus, there is, therefore, now no condemnation to believers. It is a logical conclusion, too, from something that went before. You and I are not

absolved from sin apart from the truth, but there is a great truth at the back of it which necessitates it. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

**2.** *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

Sin and death cannot govern me — cannot condemn me — cannot destroy me. Another law has come in. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has brought me into another kingdom wherein I cannot be affected, so as to condemn me, by the law of sin and death.

**3, 4.** *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

The law of God was a good law, a just and holy law. It was weak, not in itself, for, verily, if righteousness could have been by any law, it would have been by the law of God. But it was weak through our flesh. We could not keep it. We could not fulfill the conditions of life laid down under it. Therefore, what the law could not do, God has now done for us. He has found a way of making us righteous through the righteousness of his own dear Son, whom he has sent in the likeness of sinful flesh. He has found out a way of condemning sin, without condemning us. He condemned sin in the flesh, but we escaped. And he has found out a way of making us practically righteous, too, through the abundance of his grace, enabling us to walk no longer after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Blessed be God for this, for when we had broken his law, he might justly have left us to take the consequences; but he has stepped aside: he has gone beyond all that might have been expected of him, and brought in a law by which a remedy is applied to all our ills. Glory be to his name!

**5.** *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;*

They live to eat and drink. They live for self-aggrandizement. They live for the world and its pleasures alone. It is according to their nature. Everything acts according to its nature. The wolf devours; the sheep patiently feeds. They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.

**5.** *But they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

God has given us, then, the Spirit to dwell in us, and now I trust we can say that we desire holiness, and righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost, for these things are the things of the Spirit.

**6, 7.** *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

It is so deeply vitiated, so thoroughly depraved, that so long as the fleshly mind exists, it will be in rebellion against God. "Ye must be born again," for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Unless we are renewed, then, by the Spirit of God, we never shall be subject to the law of God; neither, indeed, can we be.

**8, 9.** *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

Christ does not own any that are not indwelt by his Spirit. They may wear the Christian name; they may perform some acts which look like Christian acts; but all this avails nothing. You must have the Spirit of God within you, or else you are none of his; and what a thing it is to be "none of his." "Verily," says Christ, "I never knew you." "But, Lord, we ate and drank with thee: thou didst preach in our streets." But he says, "I never knew you." They are none of his. Oh! dear friends, the highest point to which human nature can reach of itself falls short of being in Christ. There must be the Spirit of God dwelling in us, or else we are none of his.

**10.** *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin;*

Therefore, it suffers disease and pain, for the soul is regenerated, but not the body. If I may so speak, the regeneration of the body happens at the resurrection. It is then that it will receive its full share of the blessed work of Christ. "The body is dead because of sin."

**10, 11.** *But the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

So there is a complete deliverance provided for body, soul, and spirit. As Moses said to Pharaoh when he agreed to let the people of Israel go, but said that they must leave behind their flocks, “Not a hoof shall be left behind,” so no particle of our real manhood shall be left under the thralldom of sin and death. The soul is already emancipated, and the body shall be, by the Spirit which dwells in you.

**12.** *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*

For we owe the flesh nothing by way of gratitude or service. The flesh has dragged us down. The flesh has ruined us. We owe it nothing, except mastery of it. We are not debtors to it, to live after it.

**13.** *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die:*

It will die, and so will you, who make it your master.

**13.** *But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

“Mortify,” kill, put to death.

**14.** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.*

There may be a great many weaknesses and infirmities about them, but if they follow the divine leadership of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

**15.** *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.*

Is this true of you? “Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Dear friends, hearing these words, can you respond to them? Are they true of you?

**16.** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

Many of you make a profession of being the children of God. Can your own spirit say that it is true? And is there, in addition to the witness of the Spirit within you that it is true? If not, unless there is a witness to our testimony, it avails nothing. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true”; and if he chooses to put himself on a level, as it were, with the rest of

humanity in that respect, we cannot expect that our witness will stand for ought if it stands alone. No, there must be the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

**17.** *And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;*

Oh that if — “if children.” There are some that get over all that. They believe in a universal fatherhood, which is not worth the words in which they describe it. This is a different fatherhood altogether.

**17.** *If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Oh! this blessed co-partnership — this fellowship: joint-heirs with Christ: taking part in the whole heritage — as well the heritage of suffering as the heritage of glory. “It shall bruise thy heel, but thou shalt bruise his head.” There is to be the heel-bruising for the Christ, as well as for us; but there is to be the head-crushing of sin and Satan for him and for us, too.

**18.** *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Glory in us! Only think of that! You know the revelation that is in the book; but how grand will be the revelation that is in the man! “The glory which shall be revealed in us.” We shall be full of glory. And a part of God’s glory, which otherwise must have lain concealed, will be revealed in his people to his own praise forever and ever; but also to our own eternal joy.

**19.** *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

There is something that the whole creation is waiting for, and it cannot come, till God’s children are manifested — till the glory is revealed in them.

**20-22.** *For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

“The whole creation.” It is the same word all through; so I have put the same word. The whole world is in its pangs and birth-throes, and there can never come its complete deliverance into the new heavens and the new earth, except there shall also be the manifestation of the children of God, and their deliverance from all that now hampers and hinders the divine life that is within them.

**23.** *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

This is what we are looking for. Our manhood is not all soul: it is body, too. And here, as yet, this poor body seems to lie outside the gate, like Lazarus, while the soul rejoices in God. But its time of glorifying is coming. The trump of the archangel shall proclaim it.

**24.** *For we are saved by hope:*

As yet we are saved by hope.

**24-26.** *But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doeth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

That is a grand thing. We have got the first-fruits of the Spirit to be the pledge of all the glorious harvest. The very fact that the Spirit dwells in us is the conclusive proof that our bodies shall be raised from the dead. Meanwhile, the Spirit of God is helping us, as we groan and labour, towards the complete perfection. “The Spirit helpeth our infirmities.”

**27.** *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

Nor is it only the Holy Spirit who is thus helping us onward towards the grand finale.

**28, 29.** *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

And you know that he is the first-born in this sense — not only as the greatest, but that as the first-begotten from among the dead, he has risen from the dead. He has risen from the dead, and in this he leads the way for us all. “That he might be the first-born among many brethren.”

**30.** *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.*

No slips, no gaps or chasms, by the way. The foreknown are predestinated: the predestinated are the called: the called are justified: the justified are glorified.

**31.** *What shall we then say to these things?*

Shall we succumb under the sufferings of the body? Shall we yield to doubt because of all our heavy feelings, and the dullness that comes of the flesh? By no manner of means.

**31.** *If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

We can get through all these difficulties, if God be with us.

## **ROMANS 8:1-32**

**1.** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, —*

Observe that Paul writes “There is therefore,” for he is stating a truth which is founded upon solid argument. “There is therefore now” — at this very day, at this very moment, — “no condemnation” — none of any sort, — none that will lie in the Court of Conscience or in the Court of King’s Bench above: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Our forefathers used to read this verse, “There is therefore now no damnation.” One of the martyrs, being brought before a Popish bishop, the bishop said to him, “Dying in thy heresy, thou wilt be damned.” “That I never shall be,” answered the good man, “for there is therefore now no damnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” He had sought the very spirit of the text, for there is nothing that can condemn the man who is in Christ Jesus.

**1.** *Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

This is the distinctive mark of a man in Christ Jesus. He does not let the flesh govern him, but the Spirit. The spiritual nature has come to the front, and the flesh must go to the back. The Spirit of the living God has entered into him, and become the master-power of his life. He walks “not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

*2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

And nothing else can do that. Every man is, by nature, under bondage to that which Paul describes as “the law of sin and death.” There is a law in our nature, which is so powerful that, even when we would do good, evil is present with us, and we cannot get away from that law, except by introducing another, which is “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” Dr. Chalmers has a remarkable sermon upon it. The Expulsive Power of a New Affection;” and it is this new affection for Christ, which is the accompaniment of the new life in Christ, which expels the old forces that used to hold us under bondage to sin and death.

*3, 4. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

The law never made anybody holy, and it never will do so. The law says to a man, “This is what you ought to do, and you will be condemned if you do not do it.” That is quite true, but the law supplies no power to enable us to do this. It says to the lame man, “You must walk,” and to the blind man, “You must see; “but it does not enable them either to walk or to see. On the contrary, our nature is such that, when the law issues its commands, there is a tendency in us at once to disobey them. There are some sins, which we never should have thought of committing if we had not been commanded not to do them, so that the law — not because of its own nature, but because of the wickedness of our nature, is weak and ineffectual for the producing of righteousness. But the Lord Jesus Christ has come, has lived, and has died, — died for us who are his people, and has put away our sins. Now we love him; now, being delivered from all condemnation, we love him who has delivered us, and this becomes the forge by which we are inclined to holiness, and led us further

and further in a course, not merely of morality, but of holiness before God. What a blessed system this is, which saves the sinner from the love of sin, delivers a man from sinning, gives him a new nature, and puts a right spirit within him!

**5.** *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;*

Flesh cares for flesh. The man who is all body cares only for the body. The man, whose mind is under subjection to his body, minds “the things of the flesh.”

**5.** *But they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

Where the Holy Ghost is Supreme where the spiritual world has become predominant over the heart and life. There, men live for something nobler than the worldly man’s trinity, “What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?” The carnal life is only becoming to a beast, or a bird, or an insect. But when a man cares for his immortal spirit, and lives for divine and spiritual things, he has attained to the life that is life indeed.

**6, 7.** *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

As long as a man lives only for this present evil world, lives for self, lives under the domination of the flesh, he cannot really know God, or truly serve him. Such a mind as his “is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

**8.** *So then they that are in the flesh —*

That is, those who are under its condemnation and power —

**8-10.** *Cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

So that although Christ dwells in a man, he must not reckon that he will be free from suffering, and pain, and sickness, for the body has not yet risen from the dead, and does not yet feel the full effect of regeneration. The soul is risen from the dead by regeneration, and it therefore “is life because of righteousness;” and the body will, in due time, also share in the power of Christ’s Spirit. The day draweth

near when we “shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

**11, 12.** *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quickens your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*

We have got nothing good out of the flesh at present, for it is not yet “delivered from the bondage of corruption,” though it is to be delivered.

**13.** *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die:*

For the flesh is to die.

**13.** *But if ye through the Spirit do mortify —*

Or, kill —

**13.** *The deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

Shall a dying body, then, be my master? Shall the appetite for eating and drinking, or anything else that comes of the flesh, dominate my spirit? God forbid! Let death go to death, and the flesh is such; but the newly-given spirit of God, the spirit who has quickened us with immortal life shall rule and reign in us evermore.

**14-21.** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed anew. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Son of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. We are part and parcel of creation, and we shall draw it along with us. There shall be new heavens and a new earth. The curse shall be taken from the garden, thorns and thistles shall no

longer grow there; and there shall be no killing or devouring in all God's holy mountain. The galling yoke, which we have laid on the whole of creation by our sin, shall be taken off from it by our Redeemer.

**22, 23.** *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

We groan in unison with a groaning creation, and we shall not at present get rid of our aches, and pains, and sicknesses altogether.

**24-32.** *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it? Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn 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. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 3:9-27; 5:6-11; 8:1-32.

## **ROMANS 8:1-34**

The words we are about to read follow a passage in which the Apostle describes the conflict of his soul. It is rather singular that it should be so.

To catch the contrast, let us just begin at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, 22<sup>nd</sup> verse.

**22-25** and Romans **8:1**. *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Some simpletons have said that Paul was not a converted man when he wrote the closing verses of that 7<sup>th</sup> chapter. I venture to assert that nobody but an advanced Christian, enjoying the highest degree of sanctification could ever have written it. It is not a man that is dead in sin that calls himself “wretched,” because he finds sin within him; it is a man made pure by the grace of God, who, because of that very purity, feels more the comparatively lesser force of sin than he would have done when he had less grace and more sin. I believe that the nearer we get to absolute perfection, the more fit to enter the gates of heaven, the more detestable will sin become to us, and the more conflict will there be in our souls to tread out the last spark of sin. Bless God, beloved! if you feel a conflict, bless him and ask him that it may rage more terrible still, for that shall be one evidence to you that you are indeed out of all condemnation because you are struggling against the evil.

**2.** *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

I am not the bond-slave of it; I am the enemy of it; I am free from it., fighting against it, struggling like a free man against one who would bring him into captivity; but even though I sometime feel as if I were a captive, I know I am not, I am free.

**3, 4.** *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

This is our victory, that let the flesh lust as it may, we do not walk after it; we are kept by God’s grace; we are preserved, so that the bent and tenor of our life is after the rule of the Spirit of God.

**5, 6.** *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Oh! what a death it is to us if ever the flesh gets the mastery; and if it had the mastery in us, we should know that we were in death still; but oh! what a joy, what life, what peace it is to have the Spirit ruling in us, so that we are spiritually minded. God give us this to the full!

**7, 8.** *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

We must be born again then. It is no use improving the flesh. The taking away of the filth of the flesh was the old law, but the burying of the flesh, that is the new. The plunging of it into the death of Christ is the very sign of the new covenant. Oh! to know to the full, the power of the life of God for the death of the flesh!

**9, 10.** *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because off sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

That is why we have aches and pains, and infirmities, because the body is dead; that is, doomed to die, must die; it must see corruption unless the Lord come, and even in that case it must undergo a wondrous change; so we regard our body as dead. No wonder, then, that all those aches and pains and troubles of body do come upon us. The day shall come when, however, even it shall be delivered from the power of death; meanwhile, blessed be God, “the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

**11.** *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

The blessing of life is to come to the body too; it shall be immortal by-and-bye, delivered from all the infirmities and sorrows which sin and death have brought upon it.

**12, 13.** *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

It is a live thing, and a quickening thing, for ye shall live.

**14.** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

God has not got a dead child; never had one. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

**15.** *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

First, love, and then sonship; he rises in his strain.

**16.** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*

It is first a quickening spirit, and then a witnessing spirit, witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God. Now up again.

**17.** *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him,*

Up again: —

**17.** *That we may be also glorified together.*

Oh! what a rise is this from groaning under, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” up to this point, “That we may be also glorified together.”

**18, 19.** *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

It is not merely that the Spirit will bless the body, but that spiritual men will bless the whole creation. Materialism, which is like the body inhabited by the spirits of saints, is to share in the bliss which Christ has come to bring.

**20-22.** *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we*

*know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

Just as our body is, so to speak, the world, the earth in which our spirit dwells: so this big earth is the body in which the Church dwells; and this body has its pains, so this creation has its pains; but as this body is to rise again, so this creation also, though it “groaneth and travaileth,” is to be brought into the “glorious liberty of the children of God.” And What a world it will be when the curse that fell on it through the sin of Eden shall be removed by the glorious Atonement of Calvary; and when the blood of Christ which fell to the ground, which you will remember has never gone away from the earth, but is somewhere still, shall have fully redeemed the world, the whole world shall be a trophy of the Redeemer’s power.

**23.** *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

Of course, we do groan within ourselves. Who said. we did not? And those brethren who say they never groan, I wish they would learn better. It is one of the signs of grace and marks of a child of God that he is not perfect, and does not think he is, but groans after it, cries after it. “We groan without ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” For this poor body still lies in measure under a curse, still with its pains, still with its carnal appetites and fleshly tendencies to hamper and to trouble it, but this we groan after — that this flesh of ours, and the whole creation in which we dwell, shall yet have a joyous deliverance.

**24-30.** *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn 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.*

He speaks as if it were all done, because the major part of it is done in the saints, and it will only be a wink of the eye and it will all be done in every one of us who are believers. Let us look at it as done quite fully, even now, by hope that we are already glorified together.

**31, 32.** *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things!*

What, indeed, what can we say? We are lost in wonder, love, and praise. Thus much, however, we can say, for it concerns our struggles while we are here below. Paul has got that shadow still ever him — of struggling against the flesh. What shall we say in the view of these blessed things concerning that struggle? Why, this: “If God be for us, Who can be against us?”

**33, 34.** *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

Equally impossible; and if neither God nor Christ will condemn, what judge have we to fear? The Judge of all the earth, and the Judge of the quick and the dead — if neither of these condemn, condemn away who likes.

## **ROMANS 8:14-17**

**14.** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

You can judge yourself, dear friend, by this test. Do you follow the Spirit’s leading? Do you desire continually that he should be your supreme Guide and Leader? If you are led by the Spirit of God, then you have this highest of all privileges, you are one of the sons of God. Nothing can equal that honour; to be a son of God, is more than anything of which ungodly kings and emperors can boast, with all their array of pomp and wealth.

**15.** *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;*

Ye did receive it once, and it was a great blessing to you. This came of the law, and the law brought you under bondage through a sense of sin, and that made you first cry for liberty, and then made you accept the liberating Saviour; but you have not received that spirit of bondage again to fear.

**15.** *But ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

We who believe in Jesus are all children of God, and we dare to use that name which only children might use, "Abba;" and we dare use it even in the presence of God, and to say to him, "Abba, Father." We cannot help doing it, because the spirit of adoption must have its own mode of speech; and its chosen way of speaking is to appeal to the great God by this name, "Abba, Father."

**16.** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

There are two witnesses, then, and in the mouth of these two witnesses the whole truth about our adoption shall be established. Our own spirit — so changed as to be reconciled to God, and led in ways which once it never trod, — our own spirit bears witness that we are the sons of God; and then God's own Spirit bears witness, too, and so we become doubly sure.

**17.** *And if children, then heirs;*

For all God's children are heirs, and all equally heirs. The elder-born members of God's family, such as Abraham and the rest of the patriarchs, are no more heirs of God than are we of these latter days who have but lately come to Christ. "If children, then heirs." Heirs of what?

**17.** *Heirs of God,*

Not only heirs of what God chooses to give, but heirs of himself. There need be nothing else said, if this is true: "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul." "Heirs of God,"

**17.** *And joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Do you ever have in your heart a longing to behold the glory of God? Do you feel pressed down when you see abounding sin? Are your eyes ready to be flooded with tears at the thought of the

destruction of the ungodly? Then, you are having sympathy with Christ in his sufferings, and you shall as certainly be an heir with him, by-and-by, in his glory.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 27 AND ROMANS 8:14-17.

### **ROMANS 8:14-30**

**14.** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

Not those who say they are “the sons of God,” but those who undoubtedly prove that they are, by being led, influenced, gently guided, by the Spirit of God.

**15.** *For ye have yet received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

We did receive the spirit of bondage once. We felt that we were under the law, and that the law cursed us. We felt its rigorous taxation, and that we could not meet it. Now that spirit ‘has gone, and we have the spirit of freedom, the spirit of children, the spirit of adoption. I suppose that the apostle, when he thus spake and said. “ye,” felt so much of the spirit of adoption in his own bosom that he could not talk of it as belonging to others alone. He was obliged to include it thus’, and so he puts it, “Ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” He wanted to intimate that he himself also was a partaker of this blessed spirit. And woe to the preacher who can preach an adoption which he never enjoyed. Woe to any of us if we can teach to others concerning the spirit of sonship, but never feel it crying in our own souls, “Abba, Father.”

**16.** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that toe are the children of God:*

It corroborates the testimony of conscience. We feel that we are the children of God; and the Spirit of God comes forward as a second, but still greater and higher witness, to confirm the testimony that we are the children of God.

**17.** *And if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

It is to be all with him. With him in the suffering; with him in the glory; with him in the reproach of men; with him in the honour at the right hand of the Father. But if we shun the path of humiliation with him, we may expect that he will deny us in the day of his glory.

**18.** *For I reckon*

Judge, count it up, and calculate.

**18.** *That the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

These sufferings, however sharp, are short, compared with eternal glory, infinitesimal, not worthy to be taken account of; like one drop falling into a river and lost in it.

**19-21.** *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

There is a future even for materialism. That poor, dusky clod in which we dwell is yet to be illuminated with the light of God; and these poor bodies which are akin to the dust of the earth, and still remain as if they were not delivered, being subjected to pain, and weakness, and death — even they are yet to be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

**22, 23.** *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

The soul has obtained its redemption. Therefore, our heart is glad, and our glory rejoicing. But our body has not yet obtained its redemption. That is to come at the resurrection. Then will be the adoption. “Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Oh! blessed fact! Though now, in common with the whole creation, the body is subjected to bondages, yet it shall be delivered, and we — the whole man, body as well as soul and spirit — shall be brought into the liberty of the children of God.

**24, 25.** *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

Ah! brethren, if we could be all we should like to be, there would then be no room for the exercise of hope. If we had all that we are to have, then hope, which is one of the sweetest of the graces, would have no room in which to exercise herself. It is a blessed thing to have hope. Though I have heard that faith and hope are not to be found in heaven, I very much question it. I do not think they will ever die. “Now abide these three —faith, hope, and love”; for in heaven there will be room, surely, for trust in the ever blessed God that he will never cast us out from our blessedness —room for the expectation of the second advent — room for the expectation of the conquest of the world — room for the fulfilled promise of bringing all the elect to glory; still something to be hoped for; still something to be believed. Yet here is the main sphere of hope, and therefore let us give it full scope; and when other graces seem to be at a non-plus, let us still hope. I believe the New Zealand word for hope is “swimming thought,” because that will swim when everything else is drowned. Oh! happy is that man who has a hope that swims on the crest of the stormiest billow.

**26.** *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:*

And especially our infirmities in prayer, for there is where infirmities are mostly seen.

**26.** *For we knew not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

I should have thought that it would have read, “But the Spirit itself teaches us what we should pray for.” But it does more than that. He goes beyond teaching us what we should pray for. He “maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Do you know what those groanings are? I am afraid that those who never had groanings which cannot be uttered will never know anything of that glory which cannot be expressed, for that is the way to it. The groanings that cannot be uttered lead on to unutterable joy.

*27. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

That is the philosophy of prayer. Whatever God's will is, the Spirit of God writes it on the hearts of praying saints, and they pray for the very thing which God intends to give. As the barometer often foretells the weather that is coming, so the spirit of prayer in the Christian is the barometer which indicates when showers of blessing are coming. It is well with us when we can pray. If we cannot do anything else, if we feel that we can pray, times are not so bad with us as we might think.

*28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

We know it: we are assured of it.

*29, 30. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn 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.*

No breaking of these links. Where God gives one of these blessings, he gives the rest. There is no intimation of a failure somewhere in between. The predestinated are called, and the called are justified, and the justified are glorified.

*31-33. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?*

Who shall? Who may? Who dares?

*33-35. It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

All these have done their worst.

*36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

But have they divided the saints from the love of Christ? Have they made the saints leave off loving Christ, or Christ cease from loving his people?

**37-39** *Way, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

For which blessed be the name of the adorable Trinity, world without end!

### **ROMANS 8:14-39**

**14.** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

Leading implies following; and those who are enabled to follow the guidance of the Divine Spirit are most assuredly children of God, for the Lord ever leads his own children. If, then, you are following the lead of God's Spirit, you have one of the evidences of sonship.

**15.** *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

The spirit of bondage is the spirit of servants, not of sons; but that servitude is ended for us who are made free in Christ Jesus. We are no longer afraid of being called the children of God. We are not afraid of our own Father; we have a filial fear of him, but it is so mixed with love that there is no torment in it. Whether Jew or Gentile, we cry, "Abba, Father."

**16.** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

Our spirit knows that we are God's children and then God's Spirit adds his testimony to the witness of our spirit that we are the children of God.

**17.** *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

This would not necessarily be true of any man's family, for he might have children who were not his heirs; but, in God's family, all who are born into it are born "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." We must take our part of Christ's portion,— his portion here, and his portion hereafter; the rule for us who are in him shall be, "share and share alike." He himself has said, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be;" and all that he has he will divide with us. Are you willing, dear brother, to take shares with Christ? If not, then I question whether you can be rightly reckoned among his saints.

**18.** *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

"Light afflictions" are contrasted with "an exceeding weight of glory." Temporary afflictions, but for a moment, are to be followed by everlasting crowns that fade not away. What a contrast!

**19.** *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

All creation is, as it were, watching and waiting on tip-toe for the day when God shall manifest his sons who are at present hidden. In due time, they shall come forth, acknowledged of God, and then shall the whole creation rejoice.

**20-23.** *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

We have already obtained salvation for our souls, but our body is still under bondage,— subject to weariness,— to pain,— to infirmity,— to death; but, by-and-by, with the new creation, our newly-moulded bodies shall be fit to live in the new world, and fit for our newborn souls to inhabit. This is the full redemption for which we are waiting.

**24-28.** *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for*

*that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

“We know that all things work together for good.” That is a wonderfully positive statement, Paul. There are certain persons, nowadays, who say that we know nothing; yet the apostles constantly say, “We know this,” and “We know that.” These people tell us that there is a great distinction between believing and knowing,— but, evidently, it is a distinction of which the inspired apostles knew nothing at all. Read the Epistles of John, and note how he continually says, “We know, we know, we know,” and how frequently he adds, “We believe,” as though believing and knowing were the same thing. Agnostics may declare that they know nothing, if they please; but, as for us who do know, because we believe what we are taught of God in this Book, we will speak. He who has something to say has a right to say it; we know, and therefore we speak. Mark, brethren, how the apostle speaks here; he does not say that all things shall work together for good; no, but that they do work together, they are now working for your present good. This is not merely something which shall eventually turn out right; it is all right now, “We know that all things are working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” No sooner does the apostle mention that word “purpose” than he must needs found a long discourse upon it. He was not afraid or ashamed to speak of the purposes of God. There are some preachers who say nothing about God’s purpose, or God’s decree; they seem to be afraid of it, they say it is “Calvinistic doctrine.” Why, it was here, in the Scriptures, long before Calvin was born, so what right have they to call it by his name? Listen to what the apostle has to say:

**29, 30.** *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed, to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them*

*he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

There is no separating these golden links of love and mercy. That foreknowledge, to which all things future are open and present, begins the deed of love. Predestination comes in, and chooses a people for God who shall be eternally his. Upon this, in due time, follows effectual calling, by which the chosen ones are brought out, from the impure mass of mankind, and set apart unto God. Then follows justification by faith, through the precious blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ; and where this is, glory will certainly come, for “whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

**31, 32.** *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?*

Notice, it is not simply “freely give us all things;” but, “with him also freely give us all things.” You shall get all things with Christ; but you shall get nothing without Christ, for all the other gifts come in this one. God first gave us his Son; and he gives us everything in him.

**33.** *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.*

Ring out the challenge in heaven itself; trumpet it through all the caverns of hell; let the whole universe hear it: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect ?” None can, for “it is God that justifieth,” and his justification blocks every charge that is brought against his people.

Who shall the Lord’s elect condemn?

‘Tis God that justifies their souls;

And mercy like a mighty stream,

O’er all their sins divinely rolls.

**34.** *Who is he that condemneth ?*

None will answer to that challenge, for

**34, 35.** *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?*

Oh, this blessed question — this touching question! It seems to come at the end of all the others,— a rear-guard which effectually prevents our treasures from being taken from us. “*Quis separabit?*” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

**35. *Shall tribulation ?***

That has been tried. Have not the saints been beaten like wheat upon the threshing-floor? Has not addiction been to them a stern test of the reality of their faith? But Christ has loved them none the less for all the suffering that he has permitted to fall upon them.

**35. *Or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?***

When they have been in famine or poverty, has Christ ever forsaken his saints? Ah, no! he has loved them all the more. Have any of these things separated us from our Saviour? No; but they have, to our own consciousness, knitted us even more closely to our Divine Lord. Cruel men have tried every form of persecuting the saints of God; they have been more inventive in the torments which they have applied to Christians than in almost anything else; yet no torture, no rack, no imprisonment, has ever divided them from Christ. They have clung to him still, after the manner of John Bunyan, who, when they said, that he might go free if he would promise not to preach the gospel, said, “I will lie in prison till the moss grows on my eyelids rather than I will ever make such a promise as that. If you let me out of prison today, I will preach tomorrow, by the grace of God.”

**36. *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.***

But there has been no triumph over the saints in this case.

**37-39. *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

Not all that men on earth can do,  
Nor powers on high, nor powers below,  
Shall cause his mercy to remove,

Or wean our hearts from Christ our love.  
Glory be unto his holy name! Amen.

### **ROMANS 8:15-31**

**15.** *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;*

You did receive it once. You needed it. You were in sin, and it was well for you when sin became bondage to you. It was grievous, but it was salutary; but you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.

**15.** *But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

Does your spirit cry in that way tonight? Even if you be in the dark, yet if you cry for your Father, you will soon be in the light. There is no need to be distressed with any form of doubt so long as the Spirit makes this continual breathing, "Abba, Father, show thyself to me. Do what thou wilt to me. Let me taste thy love. Let me at least bow under thy hand."

**16.** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*

Our spirit feels the spirit of adoption, and so there is a double witness, the witness of our spirit, and the witness of God's Spirit, that we are the children of God. In the mouth of these two witnesses the whole shall be established.

**17.** *And if children, then heirs;*

That does not follow in other cases, but it does in the case of the family of God. In a man's family, only one son can be an heir; but in God's family, of all is it declared "if children, then heirs."

**17.** *Heirs of God,*

Not only heirs to God, but heirs of God. God himself is the heritage of his people; he belongs to them now, as an eternal endowment. "Heirs of God."

**17.** *And joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

We are to take the rough and the smooth, the bitter and the sweet, with Christ; and who will make any demur to that? If we are to be heirs with Christ, we do not wish to split the inheritance in

pieces. Nay! we will take the cross as well as the crown — the reproach as well as the honour.

**18.** *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

He had just mentioned the sufferings. They are too little. They are mere specks in the sun. They are too small to be weighed in comparison with the exceeding weight of glory which God has prepared for us.

**19.** *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestly, of the sons of God.*

So great is to be the glory of God's children that all the world is waiting for it. Every creature stands on tip-toe, looking for the coming of Christ and the manifestation of the redeemed. What must be the greatness of this thing which the whole creation has learned to expect?

**20, 21.** *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

We were in bondage, and we have come out in a measure into the liberty of the children of God. Now the world in which we live is in sympathy with us, and it is part under bondage because of sin, but it is only temporary bondage. There will come a day when the whole creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God — a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

**22.** *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

Deep groans are in the world. Have you not heard of earthquakes? Do you not know how the whole world is in a tremor? There is something coming, and all the world is groaning for that coming. God makes the universe to be like an instrument of music played upon by the fingers of mortal men: so that when they are sorrowful, the world is sorrowful, and when they go forth with joy and are led forth with peace, then the mountains and the hills shall break forth before them into singing, and all the trees of the field

shall clap their hands. “We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”

**23.** *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

As yet the body is under bondage. The body is dead because of sin: hence those headaches — this palpitation of the heart — this heaviness of the day which incases us: but by-and-bye, as the material world is to be delivered from its bondage, so shall these bodies also pass away from all the encumbrance of weakness, and disease, and death, into a better state.

**24.** *Far we are saved by hope:*

As yet.

**24-25.** *But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

What a lesson that is, and how seldom do we learn it! Oh! in this present state our main duty is, “Then do we with patience wait for it.” You want to have your cake and keep it. but you cannot eat it and keep it too. With patience wait for it. There see some fruits of the earth that are not ripe yet. You lay them by in store, and there are many good things that God has laid by in store for his people, and he says to us, “With patience wait for it.” Oh! but you would fain have heavenly joy on earthly ground. It would be a sorry misfit if it were so. But God keeps time and season, and there is harmony in his music. You shall have earthly sorrow on earthly ground, and you shall have heavenly bliss on the heavenly shore: but not till then. We do with patience wait for it.

**26.** *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities;*

Especially our infirmities in prayer. I think that if anywhere our infirmities come out, it is in prayer: even the strongest are, on their knees, comparatively weak. How few there are among us that prevail with God. as Elias did! We ought to do so. We need, none of us, stop short of the fullest stature of a man in Christ Jesus. and a man of full stature in Christ would surely carry the keys of heaven’s treasury at his girdle. He would have but to ask, and to receive — to seek and to find. May the Spirit help our infirmities.

**26.** *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

See what little worlds we are. Microcosms, — to use a harder word; for as there are groanings and travailings in the whole creation, so are there such in the little world of our own heart. Only nature's travail is but natural; but our travail is supernatural. It is the Spirit himself groaning within chosen breasts with groanings that cannot be uttered.

**27.** *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

When we ourselves hardly know the mind of the Spirit, he that searches all hearts knows it. When we feel as if we could not pray, yet the Spirit of God makes intercession in us, and the great Father reads the purport of the intercessions, and blesses us, not according to our knowledge of our own prayer, but according to his knowledge of what the Spirit means by those prayers. Have you never noticed that holy men of old sometimes spoke much greater things than they thought they should, for the Spirit of God in them spoke by them more than they themselves understood; and I believe that it is so in prayer. Oh! oftentimes the groaning, wrestling believer may have no inkling of the full purport of his own prayer, but he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

**28.** *And we know —*

Now we are getting upon a dear old passage which reads like music. There is no eloquence in the world that ever touches the eloquence of the Apostle here.

**28.** *That all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

I do not like to hear this text quoted, as I often do, only in part — only half of it. “All things work together for good,” say people. “Oh! yes; somehow or other, good will come of it.” It does not say so here. It says, “All things work together for good to them that love God; to them that are the called according to his purpose.” A special purpose and object of God for a special people. And if you do not belong to this people, things are not working together for your good.

No; but you may find that they will work together for your banishment from life and from the presence of God. Take your heed to this. The stars in their courses fight against you, if you fight against God; and the very earth groans and complains of bearing up your weight if you are a rebel against the Most High. You must, first of all, be reconciled so as to love God, and the eternal purpose must be wrought in you by your effectual calling from out of the world, or else you must not dare to intrude into the holy sanctuary of my text. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Of course, they do, for God loves them. "To them that are the called according to his purpose." Of course, they do, for that purpose which called them is not consistent with anything, but a purpose of infinite love to them. The great eternal purpose encompasses all things that happen, and bends all to the grand object of the good of the called ones.

**29, 30.** *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn 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.*

He spoke of it as if it were done because it is so sure, so certain to be done; he puts it down as a fact.

**31.** *What shall we then say to these things?*

Ah! indeed, what shall we say? If we had the tongues of men and angels, what could we say? Well, we will say this much at any rate.

**31.** *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Those afflictions that we read of just now — these reproaches which we share with Christ — what of them? They are not worth calling anything. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

## **ROMANS 8:18-39**

**18.** *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Paul made "the sufferings of this present time" into a matter of simple arithmetic and careful reckoning. He added them all up, and saw what the total was, he seemed to be about to state a proportion

sum, but he gave it up, and said that the sufferings were “not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.” Did they stand as one to a thousand? No, else they had been worthy to be compared. Did they stand as one to ten thousand, — or one to a million, — or one to a million of millions? If so, they would still have been worthy to be compared; but Paul saw that there was no proportion whatever between them. The sufferings seemed to be but as a single drop, and the glory to be as a boundless ocean.

“Not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

That glory is not yet fully revealed; it is revealed to us, but not yet in us. What, then, shall we do in the meantime? Why, wait with patience, and bear our appointed burden until the time comes for us to be relieved of it; — wait, however, with hope, — wait, too, as we must, quietly enduring the pains and pangs which precede so glorious a birth. In this respect, we are not alone, as the apostle goes on to say, —

**19-22.** *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

We live in a world that is under a curse, — a world that was made subject to bondage through human sin. What means this cold? What mean these fogs? What mean the general mourning and sighing of the air all through the winter? What mean the disturbances, and convulsions, and catastrophes that we hear about on all hands? It is the creation groaning, travailing, waiting, — waiting till there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, because the former things shall have passed away.

**23.** *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

Our soul has been delivered from the curse. The redemption of the soul is complete, but not yet that of the body. That must suffer pain and weariness, and even descend into the tomb, but its day of

manifestation shall surely come. At the appearing of our Lord from heaven, then shall the body itself be delivered, and the whole creation shall also be delivered, so we wait in a travailing condition; and we may well be content to wait, for these pangs within us and around all signify the glorious birth for which we may wait in hope.

**24, 25.** *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

This is our attitude and our condition now, — waiting for the glory which is to be revealed in us, and accepting the sorrow which is appointed to us as an introduction to the joy which is to come to us mysteriously, through it but while we are waiting, we are not without present comfort.

**26.** *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

You must, I am sure, as children of God, often have felt that Spirit within you groaning in prayer what you could not express. How often have you risen from your knees feeling the utter inadequacy of words to express the desires of your heart! And you have felt that you had larger desires than you have been able to interpret. There have been mighty pangs within you telling of the presence of this wrestling spirit.

**27.** *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,*

When you do not know your own mind, God knows the mind of the Spirit, and that is the very essence of prayer. He “knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,” —

**27.** *Because he maketh intercession for (or, in) the saints according to the will of God.*

Whatever the spirit of God prompts us to pray for, is according to the mind of God, for it is not possible that the Holy Spirit should ever be otherwise than in perfect accord with the Divine Father. The eternal degrees, if we could read them, would convey to us the same truth as the impulses of the Spirit in our heart. And this is the true exploration of prayer, — that what God intends to do, his spirit leads his people to ask him to do; and thus there is no conflict

between the eternal predestination of God and the earnest entreaties of his people. They are, in fact, the outcome of that very predestination.

**28-30.** *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

These great truths must never be separated. Any one of these things befog true of us, it is most certain that the rest are also true. Now, my dear brother, you cannot read God's foreknowledge, neither can you enter into the secrets of predestination; but you can tell whether you are called, or not; you can know whether you are justified by faith, or not; and if you get hold of those links, you have got a grip of that endless chain which is firmly fastened to the granite rock of eternity past, and which is also fastened to the rock of the glorious eternity which is yet to be revealed.

**31-33.** *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

For so we think it ought to be read. That is another question. Can God lay anything to our charge after having justified us? Will he contradict himself?

**34.** *Who is he that condemneth?*

There is only One who can, for there is only one Judge, and that Judge is Jesus. So, the apostle puts it again in the form of a question, — shall he condemn us?

**34.** *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

Shall he condemn us? It is altogether impossible.

**35.** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

What a long list of ills! They seem to make up a Jeremiah's roll of sorrow. Can they separate us from the love of Christ? They have all been tried; have they ever succeeded?

**36.** *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

But did they succeed in separating saints from the love of Christ even in the days of martyrdom?

**37-39.** *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

“Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.”

### **ROMANS 8:19-39**

**19.** *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

The whole creation is in a waiting posture, waiting for the glory yet to be revealed.

**20, 21.** *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

Everything here is blighted, and subject to storm, or to decay, or to sudden death, or to calamity of some sort. It is a fair world, but there is the shadow of the curse over it all. The slime of the serpent is on all our Edens now. “The creature itself was made subject to vanity,” but it “also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

**22.** *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

The birth-pangs of the creation are on it; the living creature within is moving itself to break its shell, and come forth.

**23.** *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

That is our state now; at least, it is the condition of the most of us. Some of our brethren have gone ahead so tremendously that they have passed out of the world of groaning altogether; they are perfect. I regret that they are not in heaven; it would seem to be a much more proper place for them than this imperfect earth is. But as for us, our experience leads us, in sympathy with the apostle, to say that we are groaning after something better. We have not received it yet; we have the beginnings of it, we have the earnest of it, we have the sure pledge of it; but it is not as yet our portion to enjoy; we are “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;” for, though the soul be born again, the body is not. “The body in dead,” says the apostle, in the tenth verse of this chapter, “because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” There is a wonderful process through which this body shall yet pass, and then it shall be raised again, a glorious body, fitted for our regenerated spirit; but as yet it remains unregenerate.

**24.** *For we are saved by hope:*

Hope contains the major part of our salvation within itself.

**24-26.** *But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:*

That same Spirit who gave us the spirit of adoption, that same Spirit who set us longing for something higher and better, “also helpeth our infirmities;” and we have so many of them that we show them even when we are on our knees.

**26.** *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

There seems to be a good deal of this groaning; it is only in heaven that there are- “No groans to mingle with the songs which warble from immortal tongues.” But down here a groan is sometimes the fittest wheel for the chariot of progress. We sigh, and cry, and groan, to grow out of ourselves, and to grow more like our

Lord, and so to become more fit for the glory which shall be revealed in us.

**27.** *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

That is the whole process of prayer. The Spirit of God knows the will of the Father, and he comes and writes it on our hearts. A true prayer is the revelation of the Spirit of God to our heart, making us desire what God has appointed to give to us. Hence the success of prayer is no difficulty to the predestinarian. Some foolishly say, "If God has ordained everything, what is the use of praying?" If God had not ordained everything, there would be no use in praying; but prayer is the shadow of the coming mercy which falls across the spirit, and we become in prayer in some degree gifted like the seers of old. The spirit of prophecy is upon the man who knows how to pray; the Spirit of God has moved him to ask for what God is about to give.

**28.** *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God,*

"All things." That is a very comprehensive expression, is it not? It includes your present trouble, your aching head, your heavy heart: "all things." "All things work." There is nothing idle in God's domain. "All things work together." There is no discord in the providence of God. The strangest ingredients go to make up the one matchless medicine for all our maladies. "All things work together for good" — for lasting and eternal good, — "to them that love God," that is their outward character, —

**28.** *To them who are the called according to his purpose.*

That is their secret character, and the reason why they love God at all.

**29.** *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Oh, what a glorious privilege is yours and mine, if we are indeed children of God! We are, in some respects, children of God in the same sense as Christ himself is; he is the firstborn, and we are among his "many brethren."

**30.** *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.*

Notice that personal pronoun “he” — how it comes at the beginning, and goes on to the end. “Salvation is of the Lord.” This is so often forgotten that, trite as it may appear, we cannot repeat it too often: “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” You might suppose, from the talk of some men, that, salvation is all of the man himself; — that is free agency pushed into a falsehood, a plain truth puffed into a lie. There is such a thing as free agency, and we should make a great mistake if we forgot it; but there is also such a thing as free grace, and we shall make a still greater mistake if we limit that to the agency of man; it is God who works our salvation from the beginning to the end.

**31.** *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

If God is that great working One who does all this, who can be against us? “Why, a great many,” says one. But they are nothing, nor are all put together anything at all, as compared with him who is on our side.

**32, 33.** *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth?*

No, that is impossible; and if he does not lay anything to their charge, what cause have they to fear?

**34.** *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.*

What, die for them, and then condemn them? Nobody can condemn them but the Judge; and if he is unable to condemn them, in consequence of what he has already done for them, then none can. But this is not all.

**34.** *Yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

Will he blow hot and mild, and first intercede for them, and then condemn them? It cannot be.

**35.** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

“Quis separabit?” That shall be our motto in every time of trial: “who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

**35, 36.** *Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

They have all had their turn; but did any of them, or all of them put together, ever divide the saints from Christ?

**37-39.** *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Blessed, forever blessed, be his holy name! Amen.

## **ROMANS 8:23-39**

**23.** *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

That is what we are waiting for: “the redemption of our body;” and we shall not wait in vain for it, for Christ is the Saviour of our body as well as of our soul, and the day shall come when even our bodies shall be free from pain, and weakness, and weariness, and sin, and death. Happy day! we may well look forward to it with the loftiest anticipations.

**24, 25.** *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it?*

This is our present position, patiently waiting for “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,” patiently waiting for “the manifestation of the sons of God,” for “it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

**26.** *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

There is much in this chapter about groaning, and that is but natural, for it so largely concerns our present imperfect state; but, by-and-by, there will be “No groans to mingle with the songs which warble from immortal tongues.”

*27. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

This explains what to many is the mystery of prayer. The Holy Spirit, being himself God, knows the secret purposes of the divine will, and therefore moves the saints to pray in accordance with that will, and makes their supplications effectual through his own prevailing intercession.

*28. And we know—*

Paul, like John, was no agnostic; he did not even say, “We think, we imagine, we suppose.” No; “we know”—

*28. That all things work together for good—*

We must not stop there, otherwise the statement will not be true, for all things do not work together for good to all men, but only—

*28. To them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

How are we to know who they are who are the called according to God’s eternal purpose? The previous clause informs us, for both relate to the same individuals; “them that love God” are “them who are the saved according to his purpose.” We cannot peer into the pages of the Lamb’s book of life, yet we can tell by this simple test whether our names are recorded there, do we truly love the Lord? If so, all things are working for our present and eternal good, all things visible and invisible, all things friendly and unfriendly, all things in providence and grace.

*29. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”*

What an eternal honour for all believers, that they might be among the “many brethren” of Christ, God’s firstborn and well-beloved Son! Here too, we see the purpose of God’s foreknowledge and predestination, that we should be “conformed to the image of his Son.”

**30.** *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.*

You see that these great declarations relate to the same persons right through the whole series: “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate;... whom he did predestinate, them he also called,... them he also justified,... them he also glorified.” There is not a single link missing from the eternal purpose and foreknowledge of God to the everlasting glory in which the saints’ bliss shall be consummated. The practical question’s for each one of us to answer are just these, have I been “called” by grace out of nature’s darkness into God’s marvelous light? Have I been “justified” by faith, and have I peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ? Then, being called and justified, I may rest assured that I have been predestinated, and that in due time I shall be glorified.

“There, where my blessed Jesus reigns,  
In heaven’s unmeasured space,

I’ll spend a long eternity In pleasure and in praise.”

**31, 32.** *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also give us all things.*

After having given us his own Son, what is there that he can withhold from us if it is for our real good? Nay, he has already virtually given us all things in giving him to us.

**33, 34.** *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

Well might the apostle ring out these confident challenges to heaven, and earth, and hell. As it is God that justifieth, who can bring any charge against his elect? Who can condemn those for whom Christ died, for whom he has risen, and for whom he is now making intercession at the right hand of God?

**35-37.** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all*

*these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

“All these things” have only made the saints cling the more closely to their Lord, instead of separating them from him. Their persecutors thought they were triumphing over them, but it was the martyrs who were the victors all the while.

**38, 39.** *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Paul had good reason for being persuaded that there was no separation for those for whom there was no condemnation, may we be among them by God’s grace! Amen.

### **ROMANS 8:26-30**

**26.** *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Groanings, then, are prayers, and prayers which the Spirit of God most certainly hears. And those desires which altogether exhaust language, or which cannot be put into language by reason of the exhaustion of our sorrow, these are nevertheless heard of God, for the Spirit of God is in them.

**27.** *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

That is, when the mind lies still, and God the Holy Spirit writes his will upon it, and also writes God’s will. Hence such prayers are sure to be effectual, for they are but the shadow of God’s secret purpose falling upon the soul as a kind of prelude to the coming fulfillment of that purpose. Saints’ prayers are prophets of God’s mercies. We are sure of it; we have no doubt whatever; we know it by experience, as well as by revelation.

**28.** *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God,*

Not yet “all mankind,” but these who “love God.”

**28.** *To them who are the called according to his purpose.*

For they would never have loved God if he had not called them to it, and had not purposed to call them.

**29, 30.** *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn 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.*

One is tempted to linger over that golden chain, and examine every link. It will suffice, however, to observe that every link is well fastened to the next. Where there is the “foreknowledge,” which is alias the “forelove,” there is also “elect” — there must be “called” — there shall certainly be “justification,” and where that is, there must be “glory.”

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 8:26-30; REVELATION 21:10-27; 22:1-5.

## **ROMANS 8:26-39**

**26.** *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:*

Our weaknesses, our insufficiencies, our inabilities: the Spirit of God comes in to be a helper to the children of God.

**26.** *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought:*

We do not know our own infirmities. Perhaps we think that we are strong, where we are exceedingly weak. The Spirit of God spies out the infirmities, and puts the help where the strength is required. “We know not what we should pray for as we ought.”

**26.** *But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Those great things in prayer that we cannot ask for, which can never be expressed in human language, the Holy Ghost translates into groans, and so we are made to groan when we cannot speak; and those groanings bring us blessings which words cannot compass. Have you been into your prayer-chamber lately, pleading with God, and have you felt as if you could not pray? We often pray best when we think that we are praying worst. When there is the most anguish, and sighing, and crying in prayer, there is most of the very essence of prayer.

*27. And he that searched the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

The Spirit knows what we want. God knows: what the Spirit is asking for; and so our prayer makes the complete round, and God sends us the blessing.

*28. And we know*

We know: we are sure of it.

*28. That all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

We know this, for we have proved it in our own experience. "All things work." There is nothing inactive in the providence of God. "All things work together." There is a unity in providence. God sets one thing over against another. Blessed be the name of God, all things work together for good. The purpose of God to his people is good, and only good; and though this or that might be injurious, yet, all put together, they work for good to them that love God. Come, my soul, dost thou love God? Canst thou say tonight, "Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee"? All things work together for thy good. Not only shall they work, but they are working, they work now, for thy good. And learn another sweet lesson. Thou art one of those whom God calls, according to the sweet purpose of his electing love, for so it stands: they that love God are the same as those who are called according to his purpose. If thou lovest God, God loves thee. Thy love to God, poor and faint though it be, is the assured token that he loves thee with an everlasting love, and, therefore, with bands of loving-kindness has he drawn thee.

*29. For whom he did foreknow,*

That is, look upon with pleasure and delight from before all worlds. Whom he did love and call to be his own. Christ is the man, the archetype. He is not to be a lone man. It is not good for man to be alone, not even for the man; and there are to be other men called by God's grace who are to be made like him, who are to be his brethren. These, whom God foreknew, with fore-love he has ordained, determined, predestinated to be made like his Son.

**29-30.** *He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called:*

Not with the common call with which he calls other men, but with the special call. The hen, when she is about in the yard, keeps on calling; but when she wants her own little ones to come and run beneath her wings, then she has a special cluck for them, and they know it, and they come, and run and hide beneath her.

**30.** *And whom he called, them he also justified:*

He regarded them as just. He made them just through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

**30.** *And whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

There is no break in this chain. The foreknown are predestinated, the predestinated are called, the called are justified, the justified are glorified. It is a wondrous chain. He that getteth a hold of it anywhere hath a hold of the whole of it, for this Scripture cannot be broken. If thou art called by grace into the fellowship of eternal life, thou shalt be justified and glorified.

**31.** *What shall we then say to these things?*

I do not know what we can say. Wonders of grace, mountains of mercy without limit — what shall we say to these things? This, at least we can say: —

**31.** *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

A great many can be against us, but we reckon them as nothing at all, if God be for us.

**32.** *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

There can be no end to the bounty of God after he has given his Son. He that has given the jewel of the universe, the very eye of heaven — what! will he not give to us all else really needed, and give freely, too?

**33-35.** *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

Dear children of God, feed on these words. They are like wafers made with honey, like cold waters from the rock. Eat, drink, and be filled. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

**35.** *Shall tribulation, or distress, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

Well, these things have been tried. As it is written, “For thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” In Paul’s day they were being hunted to the death, by thousands, and tens of thousands. Were they separated from Christ’s love? The enemy grew tired of persecution before the saints were wearied by it. You remember how, in the days of the Roman Empire, the Christians came to the judgment-seat and confessed Christ, even when they were not sought after as if tempting their enemies to throw them to the lions, or put them to death. They were destitute of all fear, and though Emperors were worse than brutes, these Christians defied them, outbraved them; vanquished them. They could not put down the Christians.

**36-39.** *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## **ROMANS 8:26-39**

**26.** *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:*

Oh, how many these are! Want of memory, want of faith, want of earnestness, ignorance, pride, deadness, coldness of heart, — these are some of our infirmities; but, thank God, we have the omnipotent Spirit of God to help us.

**26.** *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

These groanings are too deep, too full of meaning to be expressed in words. There are some things the Christian wants for which he cannot ask; perhaps he does not even know what it is that

he wants. There is a vacuum in his heart, but he does not know what would fill it. There is a hunger in his spirit, but he knows not what the bread is, nor where the bread is, that can satisfy his wants. But the Holy Ghost can articulate these unuttered groans, and the deepest needs of our soul can thus be brought before God by his own Spirit. You, then, who find it difficult to pray, do not give up praying. The devil tells you that such poor prayers as yours are can never reach the ear of God. Do not believe him. The Spirit helps your infirmities: and when he helps you, you shall, you must prevail.

*27. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

It cannot be supposed that the Father does not know what is the mind of the Spirit, since they are one God, and, moreover, inasmuch as the Spirit of God never intercedes for anything which is not according to God's will, we are sure that our heavenly Father will grant every Spirit-indited prayer.

*28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

Almost everything in this world looks to us to be in confusion, but to God's eye all is in order. One wave dashes this way, and another that, but they are all working together, and they are all working with one great purpose too. Say not, Christian, "All these things are against me." Ah, poor soul! this is the verdict of your unbelief, but you will know better than that one of these days. All things are working for you, and not one of them is working against you; therefore, be not dismayed. They are all working together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose.

*29. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

That was the very end and object of their predestination that they might become like Christ, their great perfect elder Brother.

"Christ, be my first elect," he said,  
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head  
Before he gave the mountains birth

Or laid foundations for the earth.”

**30.** *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called:*

My soul, hast thou been called of God? Has the Spirit of God ever called thee? If so, rejoice in thy predestinator. Have no doubts and fears concerning that matter, for he would never have called thee if he had not intended to save thee from before the foundation of the world.

**30.** *And whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

My son, dost thou believe in Jesus? Hast thou trusted in his precious blood? Then thou art justified. Never give way, then, to any fears concerning thine eternal salvation, for, as surely as there is a heaven, thou shalt be a partaker of its glories, for never was there a soul justified who was not afterwards glorified.

**31.** *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Hast thou the world against the Christian? What is the opposition of the world when God is on thy side? Is thine own heart against thee? What then? God is greater than thy heart. Is the devil against thee? Ah! he is mighty, but God is almighty, and he shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. Paul was no fanatic; he was a man of great experience and of sound sense; yet he makes nothing of all our foes when God is on our side.

**32.** *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

When God gave us Christ, he gave us everything, for all the blessings of this life and of the life that is to come lie hidden in Christ as the kernel is within the shell of the nut. What encouragement we have here for believing prayer! Christian, Christ is the golden key of God's treasures; you have but to use him aright, and whatever you need shall be yours.

**33.** *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*

Here is true boldness; Paul, who called himself the very chief of sinners dares to challenge anyone to lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Surely God can do so. No,” says Paul, —

**33.** *It is God that justifieth.*

He is both just and the Justifier of all who believe in Jesus, and they are

“God’s elect.”

**34.** *Who is he that condemneth?*

“Why,” saith one, “Christ, the great Judge, will condemn.” No, that he will not, for —

**34.** *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

Christian, as Christ makes intercession for you, he will never condemn you. Did he shed his blood for you, and yet will he cast you into hell? Did he rise from the dead for you, and yet will he leave you among the dead and the lost? Think not so strangely of the Christ of God, who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever, and who will never condemn those who trust in him.

**35.** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

They have been tried again and again.

**36.** *It is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

What was the effect of this persecution? Were the saints turned away from Christ by it?

**37-39.** *Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## **ROMANS 8:28-39**

**28-30.** *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn 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.*

No breaks between the links of this chain. Foreknowledge is welded to the predestination: the predestination is infallibly linked with the calling, the calling with the justification, and the justification with the glorification. There is no hint given that there may be a flaw or break in the series. Get a hold of any one, and you possess the whole. The called man is the predestinated man. Let him be sure of that. And the justified man shall be a glorified man. Let him have no doubt whatever about that.

**31.** *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

A great many, but they are all nothing. If God be for us, all they that be against us are not worth mentioning: they are ciphers. If he were on their side, then the one would swell the ciphers to the full, but if he be not there, we may put them all into the scale and reckon them as less than nothing.

**32, 33.** *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?*

Who, indeed.

**33, 34.** *It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?*

No one can, for: —

**34.** *It is Christ that died,*

And so put our sins to death.

**34.** *Yea rather, that is risen again,*

And so hath justified us.

**34.** *Who is even at the right hand of God,*

And so has carried us into heaven by his representing us there.

**34.** *Who also maketh intercession for us.*

Whose everlasting plea, therefore, silences all the accusations of the devil.

**35.** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or peril, or sword?*

They have all been tried. In different ages of the world, the saints have undergone all these, and yet has never one of them been taken away from the love of Christ. They have not left off loving him, nor has he left off loving them. They have been tried, I say.

*36. As it is written. For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

What is the result of it?

*37-39. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Halleluiah! Blessed be his name.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 138.; ISAIAH 55:1-11; ROMANS 8:28-39.

## **ROMANS 9**

Paul begins by expressing his great sorrow because the Jews had rejected Christ.

*1-3. I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:*

They hated Paul intensely; nothing could surpass the malice of the Jews against the man whom they reckoned to be an apostate from the true faith, because he had become a follower of Christ, the Nazarene. Yet note what is Paul's feeling towards his cruel countrymen; he is willing, as it were, to put his own salvation in pawn if by doing so the Jews might but be saved. You must not measure these words by any hard grammatical rule, you must understand them as spoken out of the depths of great loving heart; and when such a heart as Paul had begins to talk, it speaks not according to the laws of logic, but according to its own immeasurable feelings. There were times when he almost thought that he would himself consent to be accursed, "anathema," cast away, separated from Christ, if thereby he could · save the house of

Israel, so great was his love towards them. Of course, this could not be; and no one understood better than Paul did that there is only one Substitute and one Sacrifice for sinners. He only mentioned this wish to show how dearly he loved the Jews, so that on their account he had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. Do you, dear friends, feel that same concern about your brethren, your kinsmen according to the flesh? If they are not saved, do you greatly wonder that they are not, if you have no such concern about them? But when once your heart is brought to this pitch of agony about their souls, you will soon see them saved.

*4, 5. Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

This was what troubled the apostle so much concerning the Jews, that they should have such extraordinary privileges, and yet should be cast away; most of all, that Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men, should be of their race, bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh, and yet they would not receive him, or be saved by him. Oh, the terrible hardness of the human heart; and what poor things the richest privileges are unless the grace of God goes with them to give us the inner secret of true faith in Christ!

*6. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.*

Paul is always jealous lest anyone should suppose that the Word of God has failed, or that the purpose of God has come to naught.

*6, 7. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children:*

Now he goes on to show that the blessings of God's grace do not go according to carnal descent. It is true that God promised to bless the seed of Abraham, yet he meant that word "seed" in a very special sense.

*7. But, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.*

By passing over Ishmael, God showed that there was nothing of saving in blood or birth. Ishmael was the firstborn son of Abraham;

but he was passed by, for the promise was, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called.”

**8-10.** *That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; —*

When there were twins to be born of her; —

**11-13.** *(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

Here were two children born at the same time; yet Esau was not of the true “seed.” It matters not how closely you may be connected with the people of God, unless you have a new heart and a right spirit yourself, you still do not belong to the covenant seed, for it is not of the flesh that this privilege comes, but God has chosen a spiritual seed according to his own good pleasure.

**14.** *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.*

Paul knew very well that there would always be some who would cry out against this doctrine, that men would say that God was partial and unjust. If he had not foreseen that the declaration of this doctrine would provoke such remarks, he would not have put it so: “What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.”

**15, 16.** *For he saith to Moses, 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 willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.*

You know that the modern way of meeting objections to Scripture is to give up everything to the infidel, and then say that you have won him; but the true Christian way is to give up nothing at all, and if the truth is objectionable, to make it, if possible, still more objectionable, to turn the very hardest side it has right in front of the face of man, and to say, “This is God’s truth; refuse it at your

peril.” I believe that half the attempts to win over unbelievers by toning down truth have simply been to the dishonouring of the truth and the destruction of the doubter, and that it would be always better to do as the apostle here does, — not to disavow the truth, but to proclaim it as fully, and faithfully, and plainly as possible. Let us again read what he here says: “Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, 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 willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”

**17.** *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh,*

Paul is now going to show the other side of the same truth: “The scripture saith unto Pharaoh,” —

**17-19.** *Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?*

Paul knew that the doctrine would be objected to on this ground; evidently he intended to assert something which was open to this objection, which would naturally suggest itself to men: “Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?”

**20-25.** *Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.*

See the grand style in which God talks to men. He speaks after a royal fashion: “I will.” He asks no man’s leave for what he will do: “I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.”

**26.** *And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; —*

Though he himself had said it,-

**26.** *There shall they be called the children of the living God.*

See the splendor of this divine sovereignty, which shows itself in wondrous, unexpected acts of grace, selecting and taking to itself those who seem to be self-condemned, and even condemned by himself, of whom he had said, “Ye are not my people.”

**27-31.** *Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.*

Does it not seem strange that men who were outwardly sinful, who were utterly ignorant of any way of righteousness, and even indifferent to it, have been by the grace of God led to seek righteousness in the right way, namely, by faith in Christ, and they have found it, and God’s electing love is seen in them; while others, who seem very sincere and devout as to outward ritual, by following it and it alone, have missed their way, and never found the true righteousness? The sovereignty of God appears in the choosing of those who follow the way of faith, and the casting away of those who follow the way of mere outward righteousness. But why did Israel miss the way?

**32, 33.** *Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence:*

I say again that there have been great attempts made, with logical dynamite, to blow up this great rock of offence, and to clear away every difficulty from the path of the man who wants to be saved by his own method, and to make everything pleasant all round for him; but against this course of action we bear our continual

protest, for it is not according to the mind of God, or the teaching of his Word: “As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence.”

**33.** *And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

But if they believe not on him, they shall one day be ashamed; and, meanwhile, the eternal purpose of God shall still stand, he shall still be glorious whatever men shall do, or shall not do.

### **ROMANS 9:1-5**

**1-3.** *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:*

The apostle is evidently about to make an extraordinary statement — a statement which would probably not be believed, and therefore, he gives as a preface the most solemn asseverations that are permitted to Christian men declaring that he is speaking the truth, and also that the Holy Ghost is bearing witness with his conscience that it is so — that he so loves the souls of his fellow-countrymen that, though the thing could never be, yet in a sort of ecstasy of love he could devote himself to anything so long as his countrymen might but be saved. “My kinsmen according to the flesh.”

**4, 5.** *Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises: Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

The apostle never omits an opportunity of magnifying his Master. Though it did not seem to be called for by the immediate subject in hand yet he must put in a doxology to the name of Jesus. “Who is over all; God blessed for ever. Amen.” How any believers in Scripture ever get to be disbelievers in the Deity of Christ is altogether astounding. If there is anything taught in the Word of God, it is assuredly that Paul comforts himself in a measure by the

doctrine of election, which is fully spoken to in this chapter. My subject leads me to read again at the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter.

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 9:1-5; AND ROMANS 10.

### **ROMANS 9:1-25**

The Jews thought that God must certainly save them. They thought they had a birth claim. Were they not the children of Abraham? Surely they had some right to it. This chapter battles the question of right. No man has any right to the grace of God. The terms are inconsistent. There can be no right to that which is free favor. We are all condemned criminals, and if pardoned, it must be as the result of pure mercy, absolute mercy, for desert there is none in any one of us.

**1, 2.** *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.*

He never thought about his unbelieving brethren, without the deepest imaginable regret. How far is this from the spirit of those who look upon the ungodly without tears — settle it down as a matter that cannot be altered, and take it as a question of hard fate, but are never troubled about it. Not so the Apostle. He had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart.

**3.** *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:*

He had just that self-sacrificing spirit of Moses, that he would lose anything and everything if they might but be saved. And this is the spirit which ought to actuate every Church of Christ. The Church that is always caring for her own maintenance is no church. The Church that would be willing to be destroyed if it could save the sons of men — which feels as if, whatever her shame or sorrow, it would be nothing if she could but save sinners — that Church is like the Lord, of whom we read, “He saved others: himself he could not save.” Oh! blessed heart-break over sinful men, which makes men willing to lose everything if they might, but bless and win men to Christ! “My kinsmen,” says he, “according to the flesh.”

**4, 5.** *Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service*

*of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.*

What dignity has God put upon ancient Israel! How favored far beyond any of us in these particulars! They had the light, when the rest of the world was in darkness. Theirs was the law, and theirs the covenant promises. Above all, of them it was, that Christ came. Our Saviour was a Jew. Forever must that race be had in respectful honour, and we must pray for their salvation.

**6, 7.** *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*

Now, the Apostle is getting to his point. You Jews claim to have the mercy of God because you are of the seed of Abraham; but there is nothing in that, says he, for God made a distinct choice of Isaac to the rejection of Ishmael, as he did afterwards of Jacob, and then Esau was left out.

**8.** *That is, thy flesh which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

Now, Isaac was not the child of Abraham's flesh. He was born according to promise, when his mother was past age, and his father well stricken in years. His was the birth according to the promise, and that is the way the line of grace runs — not according to the flesh, but according to the promise. If, then, all my hope of heaven lies upon my being a child of godly parents, it is an Israelitish hope, and good for nothing. If my hope of heaven lies upon my having been born according to the promise of God — born of his grace and of his power — in that line the covenant stands. God is determined that it shall be so.

**9-13.** *For this is the word of promise. At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

So, then, there is no claim of birth, for he that had the claim of birth, even Esau, is passed by. There is, indeed, no claim at all, for God gives freely, according to his own will, blessing the sons of men.

**14.** *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.*

There is no unrighteousness, in anything that he does: and in the winding up of all affairs, it shall be seen that God was righteous as well as gracious.

**15, 16.** *For he saith to Moses, 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 willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.*

That is where it must begin. When men are condemned, what can they appeal to, but the mercy of God? Where is the hope of men, but in the sovereignty of the Most High?

**17-24.** *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory. Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*

There was the sting of it. They could not endure that God should in his divine sovereignty save Gentiles as well as Jews. But he has done so, and 'he has sent the Gospel to us; while they, having refused it, are left in the darkness which they chose.

**25.** *As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.*

Oh! what a splendid verse is this! Let some here who have been far from God until now, and never had a gracious thought, nevertheless, hear what he has done and will do again. "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved which was not beloved."

This exposition consisted of readings from EXODUS 3:1-14; ROMANS 9:1-25.

### **ROMANS 9:26-32**

The Jews thought that God must certainly save them. They thought they had a birth claim. Were they not the children of Abraham? Surely they had some right to it. This chapter battles the question of right. No man has any right to the grace of God. The terms are inconsistent. But that same grace delights to save and bless even the perverse and rebellious who will yield to its blessed power.

*26. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.*

That In the very same place where their sins made it patent and palpable they were not God's people — in that very same place shall men confess that they are the children of the living God. Oh! what has not grace done?

*27-29. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.*

God has a people, then, even in Israel with all its rejection; and he Always will have, for he will never make the seed of Abraham to be as Sodom and Gomorrha. He will love his own, and glorify himself in the midst of his people.

**30.** *What shall we say then?*

Why, say this: —

**30.** *That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.*

For thousands of years they worshipped brutish idols and blocks and stones. Their philosophy was mixed with filthiness. Their lives were abhorrent to God. Even these at last have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith, for the Gospel being preached among the Gentiles, they have believed in Jesus, and they are saved.

**31.** *But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.*

Israel followed after the law of righteousness with many ceremonies and external washings, and wearings of phylacteries and bordered garments.

Alas poor Israel

**32.** *Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone;*

And God is determined that they that are of the law shall not inherit it. He has made it a sovereign decree that the believer shall be justified and saved, and none else. They sought it not by faith, But as it were by the works of the law.

## **ROMANS 10**

**1.** *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

No curse falls from his lips, though they had persecuted him without mercy, hunted him from city to city, and gnashed their teeth at the very mention of his name. Yet he has no desire for them but their salvation; he utters no malediction against them, but the prayer goes up from his very heart, "that they might be saved." Let that be your worst wish for any living man. Whatever he may do to you, let this be your heart's desire and prayer for him, that he may be saved.

**2, 3.** *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

There are many, in these days also, who are exactly in this condition. They are very zealous; they are full of piety of a certain kind, but it is with the view of setting up a righteousness of their own. Oh! that God would save them from this false way! For there

is no acceptable righteousness but the righteousness which is of God in Christ Jesus; and the more intensely they labour after the false righteousness, the more bitter will be their disappointment at the last. Man can only be truly righteous in God's way; he will never be so in his own.

**4.** *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

He has put the law away so far as his own people are concerned; and, by that act, he has removed the possibility of self-righteousness, since we are no longer under the law. Though there can come no condemnation to us by it, there certainly can come no righteousness by it. Even Christ's own people can never have any righteousness which cometh by the law; they must look to Christ, and find in him alone all that can be demanded by the law, "for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

**5.** *For Moses—*

The Holy Spirit wisely directed the apostle to quote from Moses, for he was the lawgiver, and was looked upon by the Jews as the great representative of the law.

**5-8.** *Describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend late heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee,—*

Not up yonder, nor down there; neither in the heights nor in the abyss: "The word is nigh thee,"—

**8-10.** *Even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

To trust the risen Saviour, to put your soul into his hands, and then to confess your faith by publicly declaring that you are on his

side,—these are the things which he demands of us in order to our salvation, and these he enables us to render. Are there any believers here who have never confessed Christ? Let them question themselves how far they can be said to be true disciples of him who demands that, where there is faith, confession of it should be made. If thou believest in Jesus, look at this Scripture, and feel ashamed of thyself if thou hast been ashamed to own him as thy Saviour; for is not the promise this—that, “if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”?

**11.** *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

Shall not be ashamed of having done so, and shall not be ashamed of having missed the blessing which was promised, for he shall surely receive what God says shall follow his faith and confession.

**12.** *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek:*

In this matter of salvation there is no difference between them.

**12.** *For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

Jews or Gentiles, they must come to Christ, and come to him by the same simple way of trusting him; and if they do so, they shall be saved.

**13-15.** *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

See, then, what an honour God has put upon the testimony of his Word; and be not slow, my dear friends, to tell abroad his glorious gospel. The apostle does not merely mean preaching from the pulpit, but preaching anyhow, making known the gospel by any means. It is in that way that hearing comes; from hearing comes faith; and from faith comes salvation. Who then, would not tell out the glad news which God uses to the salvation of immortal souls?

**16-18.** *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard?*

Is that the reason why many do not believe,—because they have not heard the gospel? Well, it is not the reason in the case of anybody here present, for I suppose all of you have heard the gospel,—probably have often heard it.

**18, 19.** *Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know?*

Ah! that they did; the gospel was sounded in their ears in a hundred ways, yet they rejected it.

**19, 21.** *First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

God grant that we may not be like them! Amen.

## **ROMANS 10**

In commenting once more upon this familiar chapter, I cannot help repeating a remark which I have made to you before — that it is very significant that this tenth chapter should immediately follow the subject dealt with in the ninth chapter. In the ninth chapter, we have the doctrine of absolute predestination proclaimed in the sternest and boldest manner, —the doctrine that God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom he will have compassion. Now, it is commonly thought, by those who do not rightly understand Calvinism, that that doctrine has a tendency to burden the heart and dry up the springs of compassion. That it was not so in Paul's case, is very clear, for this chapter is a most affectionate one, and in it the apostle manifests a most loving spirit towards his fellow-countrymen, the Jews, and the chapter also contains the widest conceivable declaration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the fact being that the grand doctrine of

divine predestination is by no means inconsistent with the fullest and freest preaching of the gospel of Christ.

*1. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

Paul is writing concerning: the Jews — the very people who had driven him from city to city, and who had again and again sought to take his life. Yet he could not forget that these men were his own countrymen; and, consequently, with a consecrated patriotism, he desired beyond everything else that they might be saved.

*2. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

The Jews of Paul's day were zealous, but they were zealous in ignorance. And that is just what we may say, at the present time, concerning a large number of our fellow-countrymen, — those who are ordinarily called Ritualists. "They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." None can be more zealous than they are, but a grave error is at the root of their whole system, a fatal ignorance concerning the truth of the gospel.

*3. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

Man must have a righteousness of one kind or another; and if he has not a God-given righteousness, he seeks to have one of his own making. As the spider spineth her web out of her own bowels, so do sinful men try to manufacture a righteousness out of that which is within them; but this they can never do. The only righteousness which will stand the test of the day of judgment is that which God bestows upon believers in his Son Jesus Christ. Oh, that all men were willing to submit themselves to the righteousness of God!

*4. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

"The end of the law" is to make a man righteous, and Christ does make righteous everyone who believes in him. The act of faith in Christ accomplishes what all the good works in the world never can accomplish.

*5. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth these things shall live by them.*

That is the message of the law: “Do, and live.” But the message of the gospel is, “Live, and do;” — a very different thing. The law says, “Work to obtain life.” The gospel says, “You have life freely given to you in Christ Jesus; now work for him because you live by him.”

**6-9.** *But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up CHRIST again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shall be saved.*

How simple is the divine plan of salvation, — confess Jesus Christ believing in him; — or, in the other order, believe in Jesus Christ, and then acknowledge your faith for so it is written, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” — baptism being the way of confessing the faith which you already possess.

**10-13.** *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

What precious promises these are, and how wide they are! “Whosoever — whosoever.” That must include you, dear friend, if you believe in Jesus, and call upon the name of the Lord.

**14, 15.** *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

Here you have the whole plan of salvation. Christ is preached, sinners hear the message of the gospel, they believe it, and so they are saved. What a mass of rubbish men have interjected into this blessed simple plan! What counterfeits of so-called sacraments, and what a mass of human doings and external paraphernalia of all sorts

they have interjected! God requires none of their fripperies, and fineries, and ornate performances, but simply say, “Believe, and live.” How different is this from the cumbrous, complicated plan by which men would destroy our souls! Cling to the old-fashioned gospel, beloved, and never turn away from it. There is nothing that can take the place of the simplicity of divine truth. God grant that throughout England, and from one end of the world to the other, salvation by believing, the result of hearing the gospel, may be proclaimed.

**16.** *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.*

That is the pity of it, — that so many have heard the gospel, but have not obeyed it. This shows that the gospel comes to us as a command, because we cannot disobey where there is no order or rule. O sinner, listen to this! When you hear the gospel, it is not left to your own choice to have it or leave it, so that you are as free to do the one as the other; so if you reject it, you are disobedient to it.

**16-18.** *For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard?*

Ah, that is the important question! If they had not heard it, they could not be condemned for disobeying it, for the sin lies in hearing and yet not believing. “Have they not heard?”

**18, 19.** *Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and the words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know?*

Did not the Jews hear the gospel? Certainly they did, and they rejected it. Moses foretold it would be so: —

**19.** *First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*

So the poor outcast Gentiles have received Christ although Israel rejected him.

**20, 21.** *But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

God grant that we may not be disobedient and gainsaying as Israel was but that we may all accept Christ at once as our only and all-sufficient Saviour!

## ROMANS 10

This chapter is a gospel in itself; it very clearly points out the plan of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**1.** *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

Paul had a tender heart towards all unconverted men and women, and he longed and pleaded with God that they might be saved. Have all of us this unselfish compassionate feeling? I am afraid that there are some Christians who are very deficient in it; yet, in the dread of an immortality to be spent in woe unutterable by all unbelievers, our hearts' desire and perpetual prayer should be, as Paul's prayer for Israel was, "that they might be saved." And if there is one class among the ungodly which should touch our hearts more than all the rest, it is those who are earnestly seeking salvation, but who are seeking it where they will never find it, namely, by the works of the law.

**2.** *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

It is not sufficient for a man to be sincere in his zeal for God; sincerity must be according to knowledge if it is to be of any value. If a man travels to the North, his sincere belief that he is on the right road will not bring him to his destination in the South. If a man, in all sincerity, drinks poison under the belief that it is a cheering cordial, it will kill him, notwithstanding his sincerity; and if a man sincerely believes a lie, it will turn out to be a lie notwithstanding his sincerity. So that it is not enough to be sincerely zealous for God, or sincerely anxious to be saved; but you must seek salvation in God's revealed way if your search is to be a successful one.

**3.** *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

This is not an error on the part of the Jews alone; it is to be found also among many Gentiles. Such people must have a righteousness of their own; and Paul says they are continually "going about" to establish it. To do this, they will undertake any labour, endure any suffering, or perform any self-denial; but, all the

while, they despise God's righteousness, — despise it by the very act of preferring their own, or seeking another way of salvation instead of walking in the one which God has provided. How sad it is that so many, in all sincerity of blind zeal, should be dishonouring God, and virtually dethroning him by the attempt to set up a righteousness of their own, when he has already provided a perfect one which they will not accept.

**4.** *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*

Even the law itself has this for its main drift and purpose, — that it may introduce Christ. Its end, its intent, is to show to us our need of Christ, to point us to Christ, and to make us willing to have Christ as our Saviour; and as even the law aims at this object, much more clearly does the gospel. Oh, that none of us might miss the aim and object of this blessed design of God, — that we might find righteousness through believing in Christ.

**5.** *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, —*

And he does it in very brief, concise, and satisfactory terms: —

**5.** *That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.*

That is the beginning and end of the law, "Do and live."

**6-8.** *But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee,--*

The saving, life-giving word is not to be sought above, nor below, nor afar off; it is "nigh thee."

**8.** *Even in thy mouth, and in thy heart:*

It is not a matter of doing with the hand, but of believing with the heart, and of confession with the mouth.

**8, 9.** *That is, the word of faith which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

The gospel's command, "Believe and live," is quite as clear and plain and positive as the law's command, "Do and live."

**10, 11.** *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

He shall never be ashamed of having believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. If he really believes on him, he shall never be ashamed of the result of so believing, for that result will be eternal salvation to him, there is no doubt about that.

**12.** *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

If there be great numbers to be saved at one time, Christ will not have to do as we do when we have too many guests at a feast, namely, cut the portion of each one smaller. Oh, no! for “the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him,” whether they are Jews or Gentiles.

**13.** *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Let us read that blessed verse again.

**13, 14.** *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*

When I hear anyone say, “I cannot believe in Christ, but I will pray to him for faith; I say, surely the prayer is more difficult than the believing: “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?”

**14, 15.** *And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

We, dear friends, have had this whole process carried out in our midst. The gospel has been preached, — preached, I trust, by one who can prove, by the many seals to his ministry, that he has been “sent” by God, who has given him these confirmations of his commission in the constant conversion of those to whom he has preached. Then, many of you have heard the preaching, and have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; and, therefore, you are “saved” to all eternity. But, alas! there are some of you who have not believed

in Jesus; yet you must be saved by this process, or you can never be saved at all, for God will never try any other plan. His way of saving men is to send the preacher whom he has called and qualified to preach. The preacher preaches; the people hear; by hearing, they believe; and by believing they are saved. This is God's way of saving sinners, and he will not depart from it; so let us walk in it. May his gracious Spirit take away from us all our proud, foolish and wicked objections to his simple plan, and may we all believe and live!

**16.** *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*

So you see that even the prophet Isaiah had the idea that salvation comes to sinners by believing. He mourned and cried to his God because men did not believe the "report" which he had been sent to deliver to them concerning that Man who was "despised and rejected of men," that Man of whom the prophet truly said, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: . . . 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."

**17.** *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

With what solemnity this invests our hearing! I often hear people say, "We go to such-and-such a place of worship, to hear so-and-so preach." That is well if the preacher is, like John the Baptist, "a man sent from God;" for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God;" only let us all so hear the Word of God that, hearing it, we believe on Jesus Christ whom God hath sent; believing on him, we confess our faith in the divinely-appointed way, devoutly worship and adore the ever-blessed God, — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, — and do all we can to make the Saviour known to others.

**18, 19.** *But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know?*

These Jews for whom Paul prayed, — these people who were so zealous in seeking to establish their own righteousness, — did not they know God's way of salvation? Did not they know Jesus of

Nazareth, the divinely-appointed Saviour? Yes, they did; but they refused to believe on him, they would not walk in God's way of salvation.

**19-21.** *First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

Oh, that God would soon bring these “disobedient and gainsaying people” — whether Jews or Gentiles, — to submit themselves unto his righteousness, and so to be saved! May he graciously grant it, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

## **ROMANS 10**

**1.** *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

They had hunted Paul from city to city, but the only feeling for them that he had was a wish that they might be saved. Such a wish as that should be in the heart of every Christian; his desire for his bitterest enemy should be that he may be saved.

**2.** *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

We should always give people credit for every good thing that there is in them: it will often enable us all the better to point out other matters in which they are deficient. So Paul put it on record, concerning the Jews of his time, that they had a zeal for God, though it was not a zeal “according to knowledge.”

**3.** *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

They were so busy trying to work out a righteousness of their own that they had never accepted the righteousness as which God is prepared freely to give to all those who will receive it at his hands.

**4.** *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

This is the very essence of the gospel, that believing in Christ brings to sinners a righteousness which they can never obtain in any other way.

**5, 6.** *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith-*

Is of quite another sort, for it —

**6-9.** *Speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Oh, what a blessedly simple plan of salvation is here revealed! “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” The apostle says this plan of salvation is so near to men that it is in their mouth. When anything is in your mouth, how can you make it your own? Why, by swallowing it; and so near is the gospel to every man that he has, as it were, but to drink it down, to make it his very own. It is not up there on the lofty heights, nor down there in the deeps of the abyss, but it is here and wherever else Christ is preached, and wherever his Word is read. Oh, sinner, the Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, then, put it not away from thee, but hold it fast for ever!

**10.** *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

After believing in Christ, the man must confess that he does believe in him. It would be a shame for any believer to try to sneak into heaven without owning that Christ has saved him. If any man is ashamed of his religion, you may depend upon it that it is one of which has cause to be ashamed, but he who has true saving faith in his heart should never blush to own it. What is there to blush about in being a Christian? Let those blush who are not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**11, 12.** *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

Whoever they may be, Jews or Gentiles, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, black or white, if they will but call upon God in prayer, he will not be miserly towards them, but he will be generous towards them in the abundance of the blessings which he will give them in answer to their cry.

**13, 14.** *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*

They cannot rightly pray without faith, “for he that cometh to God must believe “that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

**14.** *And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*

Those who do not hear the gospel are not likely to believe it, and there are many unbelievers who never seek to hear it, and it is always wrong for a man to refuse to believe any truth before he knows what it really is. There should at least be a sincere searching of the Holy Scriptures, and a candid listening to the preaching of the Word, before it is rejected.

**14, 15.** *And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

The gospel brings gladness wherever it comes. The Word which we preach tells of joys that will last for ever. The gospel shall make the whole world sing with new music when it is received by all; and it shall roll away the mists that now swathe this poor dusky planet, and make it shine out like its sister stars in all the glory of God when once Christ is fully acknowledged here as Lord and Saviour.

**16.** *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.*

All who have heard the gospel have not obeyed it.

**16.** *For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*

And what Isaiah said is what we also have to say today, “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”

**17.** *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Salvation comes by faith, and faith comes by hearing, but that hearing must be the hearing of the Word of God. Surely there is no great difficulty in understanding the gospel. This is no maze in which a man may lose himself. Here are no puzzling directions which only the learned can comprehend; oh, no! but here stand the plain, simple, soul-quickenings words, "Believe and live."

**18, 20** *But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But, I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.*

Is not that a wonderful text? There are some who have heard the gospel year after year, and who have refused it, and perished; and there are, on the other hand, scattered up and down this world, thousands of people who have never yet heard it, but the very first time they do hear it, they will accept it, and be eternally saved.

**21.** *But to Israel —*

To God's ancient people, to whom the gospel had been preached when Paul wrote this Epistle: "to Israel" —

**21.** *He saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

It is strange that many, who first hear the Word, and oftenest hear it, turn away from it, while others, to whom it comes as a complete novelty, are blessed the first time they hear it. I sometimes say that there are some hearers, who regularly occupy these seats, who are just like pieces of india rubber. They are easily impressed, they yield ascent to every truth that is uttered, but they soon get back into their old shape again, and they are exactly the same, after twenty years of hearing the gospel, as they were before, only that they are still more hardened. On the other hand, there will sometimes drop into this house of prayer a thoroughly irreligious man, with a heart as hard as a flint, but the very first tap of the hammer of the gospel breaks the flint so effectually that it is never a flint again, and God's grace renews his heart there and then. It is our

earnest desire, on all occasions whatever hearers are gathered here, that God's saving power may be manifested to all present. So, may it be now, for Christ's sake, and to God's glory! Amen.

## **ROMANS 10**

**1.** *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

The same thing over again — his deep concern for his countrymen.

**2.** *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

Zeal is a good thing, but, like the horse without a bit, it becomes useless and even dangerous. Knowledge is the bridle in the mouth of zeal. Zeal is like fire, which may burn the house which it was intended to warm unless it be carefully governed. There must be knowledge in zeal.

**3.** *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

This is a great evil in the present day. There are many persons who are evidently zealous for God, but they make a mistake in supposing that they are to be saved by their own doings, their prayers their church-goings, their chapel-goings, or something of the sort, instead of accepting the finished righteousness of Christ, which is the righteousness of God. They are insulting Christ. They are insulting God by thinking that he would have given his Son to be our righteousness if we could have made a righteousness of our own, or given him up to die, if we could save ourselves.

**4.** *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

There is the point — to believe: to have faith. It is that which gives us the righteousness of which Christ is the sum total.

**5.** *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.*

And if any man did, or could keep the law, he would live by it, but no man has ever done so, or ever will. There is no hope of life by the law.

**6-9.** *But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

What a wondrous way of salvation — so near — so close — to us! What an expression that is — “in thy mouth.” We must absolutely put it out of our mouths. God has put the bread of life so near us that it is in our mouth. We must reject it as a man would reject food, if we perish. But, oh! for grace to receive it, to live upon it, to believe Christ, to trust him and so to be saved!

**10, 11.** *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

If, then, I base my eternal salvation upon Christ, and am trusting in him, not in my works, or prayers, or tears, or alms, or feelings, or even in my own repentance or faith, but wholly in him, I shall never be ashamed.

**12, 13.** *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

What a comforting text for some of you. You want salvation, but you are afraid you cannot find it. “Whosoever” — what a grand word — “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord” — that is to say in prayer, but that prayer the prayer of faith — he “shall be saved.”

**14.** *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*

That is the point: the believing is the vital matter.

**14, 15.** *And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

You see all the machinery of salvation here. God provides a gospel sends a preacher to proclaim it, men hear it; by the Holy Spirit they believe it, and they are saved. It is all in a nutshell, but oh! how blessedly suited to poor unworthy sinners like ourselves.

**16, 17.** *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

It does not ever come by seeing. Faith does not come by looking upon ceremonies — by gazing upon processions and pompous rituals. It come by the simple hearing of the Word. It is a matter of the understanding, and the work of the Holy Ghost upon that understanding. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

**18, 19.** *But I say, have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know?*

Were they not taught that God would reject them if they were disbelievers, and that he would call in heathen? Yes, they knew it, for: —

**19.** *First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*

And the heathen thus, like ourselves, were accounted dogs by the Jews, but the Lord has brought us in and made us to believe in Christ, because they rejected him. What a wonderful passage that is about the great supper which the king made, when we read, because the invited guests did not come, the king, being angry, said unto his servants, “Go ye out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in.” Even the anger of God, you see, works good to some. He was angry with the guests that did not come, but then he called us in. His anger against the Jewish people has turned to the salvation of the Gentiles, for which may God be praised. But may Israel be gathered, too.

**20, 21** *But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 9:1-5; AND ROMANS 10.

## ROMANS 10

1. *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

Desire is the mother and the soul of prayer “my heart's desire and prayer.” These Israelites had hunted Paul about, and sought to kill him. They were his deadly enemies; but the only return he made them was to pray that they might be saved. I hope you will never have a worse wish for your worst foe.

2. *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

Always see all the good that is to be seen; and, when you have to reprove and rebuke begin by admitting what is good: “They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.”

3. *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

They were very zealous; but it was blind zeal. They were very energetic; but they used their energy in going the wrong way. God has a righteousness, and our wisest course is to submit to it. Our righteousness, if we set it up in opposition to God's way of salvation, will only increase our sin. You can be ruined by your righteousness, as surely as by your unrighteousness, if you set it in the place of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. “They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

4. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

If we get Christ by believing, we have the righteousness of the law. All that ever could come to us by the highest and most perfect obedience to the law, we get by faith in Christ Jesus.

5. *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law,*

And being the one through whom the law was given, he knew how to describe it; and we may be sure that he made no mistake. This is his description of legal righteousness: —

5. *That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.*

That is it: “Do and live.” That is the law, and a very just law, too. Leave anything undone, or break the command in any respect and you die; that is the law.

**6.** *But the righteousness which is of faith —*

This is quite another thing; it —

**6.** *Speaketh, on this wise,*

And it is Moses who speaks here, as in the previous verse. This is what the righteousness of faith says: —

**6-9.** *Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

God’s way of salvation, then, is “Believe and live.” Believe in Christ; Christ dying, Christ raised from the dead. If thou so believest, thou art saved. Thou needest not mount to heaven in rapture, nor dive to hell in remorse. As thou art, believe and live. This is the way of the righteousness of God.

**10.** *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

True faith must be accompanied by an open confession. Come forward, and outwardly own what you inwardly believe. Remember those words of the Lord Jesus, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Here, as there, the confession is put after the faith, as indeed it must be. First, the reality, the thing signified, faith; afterwards, the outward and visible sign in the confession of that faith.

**11.** *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

He need never be ashamed of his faith. It will bear him up; it will bear him through; it will bear him up to heaven.

**12, 13.** *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

That is it wonderful sentence; catch at it. Doubting, troubled spirits, catch at it, believe it, practice it; and you shall find it true.

**14, 15.** *How then shall they call on him in whom. they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

See here the whole machinery of salvation. God provides salvation in Christ Jesus, he sends the preacher to tell of it, men hear, they believe, and salvation is theirs. You have not to make it righteousness, you have to accept the one that is made for you. It is not what you shall do that shall save you; it is what Christ has done. You are to get out of self-confidence into confidence in him; and as soon as you do so, you are saved.

**16.** *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.*

Oh, no; all who have heard it, have not obeyed it! There are many here who have heard it from their childhood, and yet they have not obeyed it. Notice the word “obeyed”, for the gospel comes to you with the force of a command. If you reject it, you sin against it, for it is your duty to accept it: “but they have not all obeyed the gospel.”

**16.** *For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*

So few were the obedient, that he asked where they were.

**17, 18.** *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard?*

Oh, may they hear, indeed!

**18, 19.** *Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*

Has he not done it? Israel is rejected, and remains without Christ, while many out of “a foolish nation” of Anglo-Saxons, who were idolaters, have accepted Christ. People who were regarded as dogs by God’s chosen nation Israel have come into the house of the Lord, and still Israel refuses to come.

**20.** *But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not;*

Hear, then, you who have never had any religion; you who seldom go to the house of God. Even you may be saved, for it is written, "I was found of them that sought me not."

**20.** *I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.*

Here is the manifestation of sovereign grace, God choosing and saving whom he wills, irrespective of their condition; exercising the sovereignty of his mercy in saving the most undeserving.

**21.** *But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands —*

In the attitude of invitation and entreaty, and readiness to receive, —

**21.** *Unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

And that is what he has done to thee, O then careless child of pious parents, then unregenerate hearer of the Word! All day long has he stood and stretched forth his hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. The Lord forgive all such, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

## **ROMANS 10:1-15**

**1.** *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

Let this be our "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel." Sorrows upon sorrows have come to the Lord's ancient people even down to this day; and they have been scattered and peeled, and rent and torn in almost every land. Who does not pity their griefs and woes? Let it be our heart's desire and daily prayer for Israel that they may be saved through faith in the Messiah whom they have so long rejected.

**2.** *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

In Paul's day, they were most diligent in the observance of every form of outward devotion, and many of them sincerely desired to be right with God; but they did not know how to attain the desired end.

**3.** *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

Perhaps I am addressing some who are very anxious to be right with God; they are by no means hypocrites, but are really awakened to a sense of their danger, yet they cannot get peace of mind; and the reason is that, like the Israelites, they are "going about to establish their own righteousness." "Going about" — that is to say, struggling, striving, searching, worrying themselves to get a righteousness of their own which they never will obtain, and being ignorant of "the righteousness of God" which is completed in Christ, and which is freely bestowed upon all who believe in him. Alas! they "have not submitted themselves" unto this righteousness of God, and there is a kind of hidden meaning in the apostle's expression. They are so proud that they will not submit to be saved by the righteousness of another, even though that other is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Yet this is the main point, — the submission of our proud will to the righteousness of God.

**4.** *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*

Christ is the ultimatum of the law; and when we go to the law, accepted and protected by him, we present to the law all that it can possibly demand of us. Christ has fulfilled the law on behalf of all who believe in him, so that its curse is abolished for all of us who approach it through Christ.

**5-9.** *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

"The righteousness which is of faith" is quite another thing from the righteousness which is of the law. It is not a thing of doing, and living by doing, but of trusting, and living for ever by trusting. What

are you at, —you who would fain clamber up to the stars, or you who would plunge into the abyss? There is nothing for you to do, there is nothing for you to feel, there is nothing for you to be, in order that God may accept you; but, just as you are, if you will receive Christ into your heart, and confess him with your mouth, you shall be saved. Oh, this glorious way of the salvation of sinners, — so simple, yet so safe, — so plain, yet so sublime, — for me to lay aside my own righteousness, and just to take the righteousness of Christ, and be covered with it from head to foot! I may well be willing to lay aside my own righteousness, for it is a mass of filthy rags, fit only to be burned.

**10-14.** *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*

How can there be true prayer where there is no faith? How shall I truly pray to God if I do not really believe in him? “For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

**14.** *And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*

We must know what it is that we are to believe; and knowing it, we shall be helped by the Holy Spirit to believe it,

**14.** *And how shall they hear without a preacher?*

If the Word of the Lord does not get to a man either by the living voice, or by the printing-press, which often takes the preacher’s place, how is he to believe it? You see here what I have often called “the whole machinery of salvation.” First comes the preacher proclaiming the gospel, then comes the sinner listening to it, then comes the hearer believing it, and in consequence calling upon the name of the Lord as one who is saved with his everlasting salvation.

**15.** *And how shall they preach, except they be sent?*

Here is the great engine at the back of all the machinery, — God sending the preacher, — God blessing the Word, — God working faith in the heart of them that hear it.

**15.** *As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things?*

### **ROMANS 10:1-19**

**1-3.** *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

A fault — a pitiable and grievous fault — that men should be in earnest and very zealous, and yet nothing should come of it, because they spend that zeal in a wrong direction. Men would make themselves righteous. They would come before God in the apparel of their own works, whereas God has made a righteousness already, which he freely gives, and for us to try and produce another is to enter into rivalry with God — to insult his Son, and do dishonour to his name. May God grant that any here who are very zealous in a wrong direction may receive light and knowledge, and henceforth turn their thoughts in the right way.

**4, 5.** *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.*

That is the righteousness of the law. We are not under that covenant now. We shall never attain to righteousness that way.

**6-9.** *But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

How very simple! No climbing, no diving, no imagining, no long reckoning of the understanding, no strangling of the mental faculties. It is just believe God's testimony concerning his Son, and thou shalt be saved.

**10, 11.** *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek:*

[Gentile] in this matter.

**12, 13.** *For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

This was the old prophecy of Joel. The Jews knew it. It is the new teaching of the gospel. The Gentiles know it. Oh! who would not wish to be in that broad “whosoever,” that he might find salvation?

**14, 15.** *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher! And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

So that, rightly looked upon, the humblest preacher of the gospel stands in the most solemn relationship towards mankind. His Master sends him. He tells his message. Men hear it, believe it, and by it are saved. Happy is the messenger. Well may his heart rejoice, even when his soul is heavy, because he has such work to do in his Master’s name.

**16.** *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*

And what Isaiah says, many and many a preacher since has had to say. “Woe, woe to us for this.”

**17-19.** *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know?*

Did not the Jewish people have a time of hearing and instruction? Certainly they knew, and they knew also that the gospel was not to be confined to them. They had a warning that it should even be taken from them and sent to other nations.

This exposition consisted of readings from ISAIAH 42:1-17; 43:18-25; ROMANS 10:1-19.

## ROMANS 10:1-20

1. *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

Now these people had persecuted the Apostle. Wherever he went they had followed him up; they had hindered his work: they had sought his life: and yet this was the only return that he made to them — to desire and pray that they might be saved. Let us never be turned aside from this loving desire for those among whom we dwell. We wish them nothing worse — we cannot wish them anything better than that they may be saved. Let us not only desire it, but let us pray for it. Let us turn our desires into the more practical and holy form of intercession.

2. *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

Always make allowance for anything that is good in those who, as yet, are not converted. We must not be unjust with them because we desire to be faithful to them.

3. *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

And that is the great mischief with persons who are not saved. They are very sincere, very earnest, but they will not submit to the righteousness of God; they will not agree to be made righteous by the grace of God through Jesus Christ; but they “go about” — that is the Apostle's word. It is very expressive of the energy men will put into it, and the shifts to which they will have recourse, in order to work out a righteousness of their own. They will go about, aye, even to the very gates of hell; they will try to climb up by prayers, even to the gates of heaven. They will go about to establish their own righteousness, but they do not know the righteousness of God, and they refuse to submit themselves to it.

4. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

He that believes in Christ is as righteous as the law could have made him, if he had kept it perfectly. The end of the law is righteousness; that is, the fulfilling of it; and he that hath Christ will

see the law fulfilled in Christ, and the righteousness of Christ applied to himself.

**5, 6.** *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise,*

Ah! that is a very different sort of thing. It does not speak about doing and living, “but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise.”

**6-9.** *Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. ) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

There is the gospel in a nutshell. What a very simple way it is — to believe these great facts about the Lord Jesus Christ — really to believe them so that they become practical factors in your life. This is all the way of salvation. Christ has not to be fetched down. He has come. He has not to be fetched up. He has risen from the dead. The work is finished. What thou hast to do is to believe in that finished work and accept it as thine own, and thou shalt be saved.

**10.** *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

How different all this from that going about to establish our own righteousness, this setting up of prayers, and tears, and church-goings, and chapel-goings, and good works, and I know not what beside! Instead of that, here is Christ set forth, and “ye are complete in him.” If you take him to be yours, you are “accepted in the Beloved,” and “being justified by faith, you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Oh! what a blessing is this!

**11.** *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

Though he did much that he need be ashamed of, yet when the law so brought him to believe in Jesus Christ for righteousness, he is righteous, and he is so righteous that he shall never be ashamed of his righteousness, nor ashamed of his faith in Christ. Would God

that some who are going about after a righteousness of their own would be led to try this method, and believe in Jesus Christ.

**12.** *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek:*

What a blessed word that is — “There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile”! There are some that want to keep up that difference. They say that we are Israel, or something of the kind. I do not care what we are. There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.

**12.** *For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

Someone said to me, “I think that the Romish Church cannot be the Church of Christ. I do not think that the Church of England is the Church of Christ. Do you think the Baptists are the Church of Christ?” And my answer was, “The Church of Christ is to be found mixed up in all churches, and no churches at all.” It is a people that God has chosen from among men, and they are to be found here and there and everywhere, a spiritual seed that God has marked out to be his own; and they are known by this — that they call upon the Lord, and “the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”

**13.** *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

We call upon that name by having confidence in it; by speaking to God in prayer, using that name; by adoring and reverently proclaiming the majesty and the name of God. Whosoever shall call upon or invoke that great name shall be saved.

**14.** *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*

For at the bottom of the saving invocation or call there must be real faith. There cannot be any true worship of God unless it be grounded and bottomed upon faith in God.

**14.** *And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*

There cannot be such a thing as believing what has never been spoken in our hearing, and has never been made known to us. Of course, reading often answers the same end as hearing. It is a kind of hearing of the Word; but a man must know, or he cannot believe.

**14.** *And how shall they hear without a preacher?*

How is that possible? Do you see the machinery of the gospel? There is the calling upon the name. That comes of faith. There is the

faith that comes of hearing; but there is the hearing that comes of preaching. Now a little farther.

**15. *And how shall they preach, except they be sent?***

Poor preaching. It will not be the kind of preaching that produces believing hearing, except they be sent. If God does not send the man, he had better have stopped at home. It is only as God sends him that God will bless him. He is bound to back up his own messenger when he delivers God's own message. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?"

**15. *As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!***

And they are so beautiful because, you see, God has put them at the root of everything. God makes the preacher whom he sends to be the source of so much good, or the channel of so much good, for by his preaching comes the hearing, and by the hearing comes the believing, and out of the believing come the calling upon the name and the salvation.

**16. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.***

"But." A sorrowful "but" is this. Oh! this is the mischief of it. The gospel, then, has an authority about it; or else the Apostle would not speak of obeying the gospel. Men are bound to believe what God declares to them, and their not believing is a disobedience. "They have not all obeyed the gospel."

**16. *For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?***

As if there were so few that did believe it, that he had to ask who they were.

**17. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***

You are wise, therefore, dear friend, if you are seeking salvation to be a hearer of the Word; but mind that it is the Word of God that you hear, because the word of man cannot save you. It may delude you. It may give you a false peace; but the hearing that saves is hearing which comes by the Word of God. Oh! take care, then, that you do not run hither and thither just because of the cleverness of certain speakers; but keep you to the Word of God whoever preaches it, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

**18.** *But I say, Have they not heard?*

These very people for whom the Apostle prayed — have they not heard?

**18.** *Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.*

The preaching of the gospel went forth amongst those Israelites, who rejected it. Wherever they went, the gospel seemed to follow them like their shadows. They could not escape from it, but they did not believe it.

**19.** *But I say, Did not Israel know?*

Assuredly, Israel did know, but did not believe.

**19.** *First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*

Moses told them that it would be so if they rejected Christ. Christ would be preached to the Gentiles, and those whom they thought to be foolish would come in and accept what they had rejected.

**20.** *But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.*

He told them, therefore, that God would save a people who hitherto had never sought after God — that he would send the gospel to a people that were dead in sin, and had never asked to receive the light and life of God.

## **ROMANS 12:1-16**

**1.** *I beseech you therefore, brethren,*

Paul is a calm reasoner. He is a bold starrer of truth, but here he comes to pleading with us. I think that I see him lift the pen from the paper and look round upon us, as, with the accent of entreaty, he says, “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, by God’s great mercy to you, his many mercies, his continued mercies.” What stronger plea could the Apostle have? “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.”

**1.** *By the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

Though he beseeches you to do it, he claims a right to it. It is but your reasonable service. Do we need to be entreated to be reasonable? I am afraid that we do sometimes. And what are we to do? To present our bodies to God, not our souls alone, to make real, practical work of it. Let this flesh and blood in which your body dwells be presented unto God, not to be killed and to be a dead sacrifice, but to live and still to be a sacrifice, a living sacrifice unto God, holy and acceptable to him. This is reasonable. God help us to carry it out.

**2.** *And be not conformed to this world:*

Do not live as men of the world do. Do not follow the customs, the fashions, the principles of the world. "Be not conformed to this world."

**2.** *But be ye transformed*

It is not enough to be nonconformists. Be transformed ones, altogether changed into another form.

**2.** *By the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

It is by holy living, by consecrated bodies, that we are to prove the will of God. We cannot know it, we cannot practically work it out, except by a complete consecration unto God.

**3.** *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

Humility is sober thinking. Pride is drunken thinking. He that thinks more of himself than he should is so far intoxicated with conceit; but he that judges aright and is, therefore, humble, thinks soberly. God give us to be very sober in our thoughts of ourselves.

**4, 5.** *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

Hence the diversity. If the hand were made exactly like the foot, it would not be a tenth part as useful; and if the eye only had the

same faculty as the ear, it would not be able to see, and the whole body would be a loser thereby. Do we begin to compare eyes, and ears, and feet, and hands, and say, "This is the better faculty"? No. They are each one needful. So do not compare yourselves among yourselves, for if you are in the body of Christ, you are each one needful, and the peculiarity which you possess, and the peculiarity which your brother possesses, have their place in the body corporate, and must be precious before God.

**6-8.** *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth on exhortation:*

Keep to your own work; stand in your own niche. If you are only an exhorter, do not pretend to teach. If your work is ministry, and you cannot prophesy, do not attempt to do it. Every man in his own order.

**8, 9.** *He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation.*

Do not pretend to a love that you have not got. Do not lard your speech with "dear" this and "dear" that, when there is no love in your heart; and even if your heart be full of love, show it without spreading molasses over your talk, as some do. "Let love be without dissimulation."

**9.** *Abhor that which is evil;*

Be a good hater. Abhor that which is evil

**9.** *Cleave to that which is good.*

Stick to it. Hold it fast. Do not go an inch beyond it.

**10.** *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;*

Hear this, ye members of the church. Endeavor to carry it out by a kindly courtesy and a real sympathy one with another. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love."

**10.** *In honour preferring one another;*

Putting another before yourself, aspiring after the second place, rather than the first.

**11.** *Not slothful in business;*

A lazy man is no beauty anywhere.

**11. *Fervent in spirit;***

Burn. Let your very soul get hot.

**11, 12. *Serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope;***

When you have not anything else to rejoice in, rejoice in hope.

**12. *Patient in tribulation;***

The word “tribulation” signifies threshing as with a flail. Be patient when the flail falls heavily.

**12, 13. *Continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints;***

When you have told your own necessity to God, then help the necessities of those who come to you.

**13, 14. *Given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.***

A Christian man cursing is a very awkward spectacle. Even the Pope, when he takes to cursing, as at least the former one used to do very liberally, seems as if he could hardly be the vicar of God on earth. Our work is to bless the sons of men. “Bless and curse not.”

**15. *Rejoice with them that do rejoice,***

Do not be a wet blanket on their joys. If they have good cause for rejoicing, join in it. Help them to sing their hymn of gratitude.

**15. *And weep with them that weep.***

Sympathize with mourners. Take a share of their burden. I really believe that it is easier to weep with them that weep than it is to rejoice with them that do rejoice; for this old flesh of ours begins to envy those who rejoice, whereas it does not so much object to sympathize with those that sorrow. Carry out both commands. “Rejoice with them that do rejoice. Weep with them that weep.”

**16. *Be of the same mind one toward another.***

Agree together, you Christian people. Do not be always arguing and discussing. Be of the same mind one towards another. In church life very much must depend upon our unity in mind as well as in heart. “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” — these help to make a good foundation for Christian fellowship.

## **ROMANS 15:1-16**

**1.** *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

When we are free from scruples upon any point, and feel that there are things that we may do because we are strong, yet let us not do them if thereby we should grieve others who are weak. Let us think of their infirmities; and whatever liberty we may feel entitled to claim for ourselves, let us look at the matter from the standpoint of other people as well as from our Own, that we may bear the infirmities of the weak, and not seek to please ourselves.

**2, 3.** *Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ—*

Our Master, and Lord, and great Exemplar: “For even Christ”—

**3.** *Pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on, me.*

He took the most trying place in the whole field of battle; he stood where the fray’ was hottest. He did not seek to be among his disciples as a king is in the midst of his troops, guarded and protected in the time of strife; but he exposed himself to the fiercest part of all the conflict. What Jesus did, that should we who are his followers do, no one of us considering himself, and his own interests, but all of us considering our brethren and the cause of Christ in general.

**4.** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,—*

This is as if somebody had said, “Why, Paul, it was David who said what you just quoted” “Yes,” he replies, “I know that I quoted David, but he spoke in his own person concerning his Lord, ‘for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.’”

**4, 5.** *That we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation—*

“Comfort” is really the word he used, turning into prayer the thought which had been suggested by his use of the words “patience and comfort.” “Now the God of patience and comfort”—

**5.** *Grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:*

“Make you to be unanimous, not concerning that which is evil, but that you may be of one mind in your likeness to Christ Jesus.” What a blessed harmony it would be if, not only all in any one church, but all in the whole of the churches were likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus! It will be so when he gathers those who are now scattered; but may we never hope to have it so here on earth? I cannot tell; but, at any rate, let us all strive after it. Let us all endeavor to pitch our tune according to Christ’s keynote; and the nearer we get to that, the less discord there will be in the psalmody of the church. We shall be likeminded with one another when we become likeminded with Christ; but not till then.

**6, 7.** *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.*

Christ did not receive us because we were perfect, because he could see no fault in us, or because he hoped to gain somewhat at our hands. Ah, no! but, in loving condescension covering our faults, and seeking our good, he welcomed us to his heart; so, in the same way, and with the same purpose, let us receive one another.

**8.** *Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:*

It was to Abraham and his descendants that the promise was made that, in him, and in his seed, all the nations of the earth should be blessed. So our Lord came, as a Jew, to be “a minister of the circumcision.” Let us never forget that he came to those whom we are apt to forget; and, peradventure, even to despise, “to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.”

**9-12.** *And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.*

There were plain indications, in the Old Testament, that the blessing was meant for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews; but, still, it was made known to the Jews first, and we must never forget that.

### 13. *Now the God of hope—*

Turn back to the fourth verse, and note the expression, “that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope;” then read in the fifth verse, “The God of patience and comfort;” and see how Paul here goes back to that last word in the fourth verse, “Now the God of hope”—

**13-16.** *Fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God. That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

Now would have been the time for Paul to say that he had been made a minister “to offer the unbloody sacrifice of the mass,” if such a thing had been right;—to offer up the daily sacrifice, as the so-called “priests” aver that, they now do; but he says nothing of the sort; and even when he represents the Gentiles as being offered up, he does not speak of any sacrifice going therewith, but says that it “might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”

### **ROMANS 15:13-33**

**13-27.** *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God. That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought*

*by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed. Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are.*

For these Achaians and Macedonians had received the gospel from the saints in Jerusalem. The Gentiles had been made partakers of their spiritual things, so it was their duty to minister to the poor Christian Jews in carnal things.

**27, 28.** *For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit,-*

That is, "when I have delivered the money, and obtained a receipt in full for it; when I have discharged my duty in this matter,"-

**28, 29.** *I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*

He was sure of that, but he did not know how he would go in other respects. He did not know that he would go to Rome as a prisoner; he could not foresee that he would be sent there as an ambassador in bonds; and little, I wean, did he care in what manner he would go, so long as he had the absolute certainty that he should go "in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

**30, 31.** *Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;-*

For there were some saints in Jerusalem who were very narrow-minded, and who hardly thought it right to accept anything from Gentiles. They had not got clear of their Jewish bonds, and Paul was a little afraid lest what he was taking to them might not be acceptable, so he asked the Romans to pray about that matter. Is there anything about which believers may not pray? If there be, then we have no right to have anything to do with it. Bring everything before God in prayer, for all right thing way lawfully be prayed about. So Paul asked the Christians in Rome to pray about that matter of his journey to Jerusalem, and also to pray for his return,-

**32, 33.** *That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.*



# 1 CORINTHIANS

## 1 CORINTHIANS 1

I am going to speak about the testimony of the apostle Peter concerning his Lord, but we will first read together part of the writings of his “beloved brother Paul,” that we may see how these eminent servants of Christ agreed in their witness-bearing.

*1-3. Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

So this is a message to us also who “call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

*4-9. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Paul was going to blame them for some things that were not right, but he began by commending whatever good was in them by God’s grace.

*10-12. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.*

So that, at the least, there were four parties in that one little church which ought to have been knit together in unbroken harmony; this is only one instance of what has happened hundreds of times since. These Corinthians had a great many speaking brethren among them, and they held services in which it was open to anybody to speak as he felt inclined. There was no reason why they should not do so; but what was the result of it? This Christian liberty of theirs, by-and-by, tended to mischief. They became divided into factions, they did not practice discipline as they ought to have done, and therefore this community at Corinth is a beacon to all other churches, warning them not to carry on their worship in a similar style. It is a very curious thing that some people have taken these Corinthians as an example instead of a warning; and, having copied their methods, the very same result has followed, till there is no section of the Church of Christ that has become such a scandal, through its divisions and its intestine quarrels, as that which has imitated the Corinthians in their mode of worship. I suppose that, while human nature is what it is, the same causes will produce the same results to the very end of the chapter. Paul does not tell them that their mode of worship was wrong: perhaps it was not, for great liberty is allowable to Christians; but he does lay the axe at the root of their divisions.

**13, 14.** *Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;*

They were such a quarrelsome set of people that he could not have taken any comfort from having baptized them; he was glad that they could not quote his name as having done so; and thus, it may be, have added still more to their division and strife.

**15-18.** *Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

I suppose that, in that church, with its many eloquent speakers and men of knowledge, there came to be a spirit of emulation among

them as to which should speak best; sad some brethren were tempted to find novel meanings in the Word, and to come to the meetings to tell of their wonderful discoveries. The apostle says that he did not so preach; he kept to the cross of Christ, which some counted to be but foolishness. "We know all about that," said they. "Ah, but!" replied the apostle, "unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

**19-21.** *For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

God, in his infinite wisdom, raised up a number of philosophers just about the time of the coming of Christ, and a little before that great event. If ever there were great minds upon the earth, it was then; yet these men, with all their schools of thought, knew not God, and the people did not follow after them, so that the earthly wisdom turned out to be a failure.

**22-29.** *For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men; for ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath 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, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.*

And, at this day, it is a great snare to the Church when she glories in her education, when she puts any confidence in the learning, or the wit, or the eloquence of her ministers, when she relies in any degree whatever upon an arm of flesh. The sword of the Spirit, if it be put into a velvet and embroidered scabbard, is all the worse for that; pull it out. The Word of God cannot cut while it

is hampered with human wisdom and human learning half as well as when its keen edge alone is used. It is the Lord, by the power of his Spirit, who must make the Word effectual. Oh, for more faith and truer faith in him!

**30, 31.** *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

There is no one else in whom we may glory; far hence be every form of boasting except that of making our boast in the Lord, and especially of glorying in the great atoning sacrifice of his dear Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 1**

**1, 2.** *Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth,*

-Note the humility of Paul in associating with himself an almost unknown brother, Sosthenes. Although the letter is written by Paul alone, yet, as if he did not care to stand in isolation even for a moment, he associates Sosthenes with himself in the salutation: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth," —

**2.** *To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,*

Called to sacred uses, set apart unto God. That is the call of all believers; they are like those vessels of the sanctuary which were not to be used by any but the priests of God, and by them only for God's service.

**2.** *With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:*

That is a very happy phrase, "both theirs and ours". There are multitudes of saints whose faces we never saw yet Christ is theirs, there are some with whom we might not agree in all particulars, yet Christ is theirs just as much as he is ours. All Christ is theirs, and all Christ is ours, and here is the grand bond of union between believers of different nationalities and different tongues.

**3.** *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Grace first, for that is the fountain; then peace comes, for that is the fitting stream to flow from the fountain of grace. Seek not peace first, for there is no peace for unregenerate man; grace first, then peace, and both must come “from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

**4.** *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;*

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

**5, 6.** *That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:*

The church at Corinth was an important church, with more than the usual number of speaking men among the members. This led to mischief, but had they known how to use this talent aright, the church at Corinth might have been of great service; instead of watch, it split itself up into little parties, and became one of the worst churches that then existed, as certain communities which imitate them in this present day, have also done.

**7, 8.** *So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul continues to recognize the abundance of their endowments, and to express for them the utmost of affection, and then he adds his full conviction that God would prove the power of his grace by keeping them unto the end, and then presenting them “blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**9.** *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” To be called by the faithful God is the guarantee of everlasting salvation.

**10.** *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

They could not speak the same thing if they had not the same mind and the same judgment. Paul dreaded the introduction of anything that would divide the hearts of believers one from another; and, beloved, let every one of us, wherever we go, be on the side of Christian truth, Christian unity, and Christian love. There is no true unity outside of truth; and the nearest way to Christian union is union in the truth. When error shall be destroyed, that which divides will be taken away; when truth is dominant, union will be universal, but it will not be so before that is the case.

**11.** *For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.*

He does not go beating about the bush, but he speaks straight out, and gives the name of his informants, for persons who bring reports about others should always be ready to have their names mentioned. It may be unpleasant for them, but it is sometimes necessary to do unpleasant things and those who will not allow their names to be mentioned in connection with a statement adverse to character deserve no notice whatever.

**12.** *Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.*

The last were as bad as the others, it makes no difference what the party name is, for it may only thinly conceal the most sectarian spirit to say, “I am of Christ.”

**13.** *Is Christ divided?*

Paul begins with that, for it is the worst of all divisions to make Christ the head of a party in his own church.

**13-16.** *Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.*

Paul considered that it was a providential circumstance that he had baptized no more of them, else they would have cried themselves up as superior to those who had been baptized by others.

**17.** *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*

It is true that baptism is in the original commission of all Christ's servants, but it occupies a very secondary place compared with the preaching of the gospel; and was an evil day when the Christian Church began to put rites before doctrines, and ceremonies in the place that should be occupied by the gospel itself. Paul therefore says that his main commission was not to baptize, "but to preach the gospel."

**18-20** *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*

Indeed he has; he has let it run the full length of its tether so that we may see the folly that can be taught by wise men.

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

Not by foolish preaching, but by that preaching which men call foolishness.

**22.** *For the Jews require a sign,*

They were always looking for supernatural manifestations.

**22.** *And the Greeks seek after wisdom:*

They would believe nothing but what could be proved to them by logic.

**23-20.** *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. They call it foolishness, but it is wiser than men's wisdom. God at his lowest (if we can imagine such a thing,) is wiser than man at his highest "and the weakness of God (if such a thing could be,) is stronger than men."

**26-28.** *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath 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, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: —*

Those that do not even seem to have an existence, those that are so despicable that men do not deign to take any account of them, these are the very things with which God shall break in pieces the many mighty errors of all the ages.

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

## **1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9**

**1.** *Paul, called to be an, apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,*

Paul could never have sustained the great weight of responsibility and tribulation which fell upon him if he had not felt that he was "called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God." No man will ever be fit for the ministry of the Word unless he is called to it by God. This also will be your strength in every other station of life; if God has called you to your peculiar work and warfare, he will not send you at your own charges, but he will be at the back of you, and support you even to the end. I think it is for this reason that Paul so constantly dwells upon his own calling when he

is about to write to the churches, that he may remind other believers that they have similar privileges in their spheres of labour.

**2, 3.** *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

A church should be made up of sanctified persons, those who have been set apart in Christ from before the foundation of the world, those who have been called by the Spirit of God to holiness of life. We sometimes sing, — “With them number’d may we be Now, and through eternity;”-- but if we are not holy, if we are not truly sanctified, how can we expect to be numbered with the Church of Christ? Where there is no true holiness, there is no work of the Spirit of God. For all the holy ones Paul desires grace and peace, for they still need these blessings. The holiest of men still have spots about them, and they need that grace and peace should be given to them from day to day through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**4.** *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;*

It is something to be thankful for God’s goodness to yourself, but it is a higher virtue to be thankful for God’s goodness to others. How grateful we might be all day long if we had a quick eye to see the grace of God in our fellow-Christians, and if we blessed God for it whenever we saw it! There are some whose eye is much more quick to see imperfections than to see graces; it is a pity to have such a jaundiced eye as that; may we have a good, sound, clear, gracious eye, which will see all the good there is in our fellow-believers; and may we then ascribe it all to God, and bless and praise him for it!

**5-8.** *That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

It was very wise of Paul thus to praise these Corinthians where they could be praised, for he was about to upbraid them and reprove them for many things which were not pleasing to God. If you have

the unpleasant duty of rebuking those who deserve it, always take care that you begin by saying all that you can, and all that you ought, in their favor; it will prepare the way for what you have to say to them afterwards. The Corinthians were a highly-gifted church; they probably had more knowledge and more of the gifts of utterance than any other church of their day; but, alas! they fell into greater sin than did their sister churches. Great gifts are not great graces; but great gifts require great graces to go with them, or else they become a temptation and a snare. Yet Paul felt quite sure that God would keep even these Corinthians with all their imperfections, and confirm them unto the end; and that which was true of them, is also true of all the Lord's people, God will preserve them to the very end.

*9. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## **1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-24**

*1. Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,*

This brother had been put to great shame. He was beaten before the judgment-seat, if you remember, and now he has the great and lasting honour of being mentioned by the apostle with himself. God will honour those who bear dishonour for his name's sake. Be not ashamed even to be beaten for Christ; the stripes are stripes of glory.

*2. Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:*

The epistles were written to distinct churches, but they have a bearing upon all Christians; hence the apostle says, "With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." Let us thank God no Scripture is of private interpretation; every promise belongs to all the seed. If you are a believer, you may freely appropriate to yourselves whatever was said of old to any individual believer, or to any congregation of believers.

**3, 4.** *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;*

Paul is a great preacher of grace, and therefore he is a great giver of thanks. Grace should be followed with thankfulness. "I thank my God." What a beautiful expression! Not only "I thank God," but "I thank my God." He has God in possession, he has taken him to be his own for ever and ever. Beloved, have we all done the same? Can we say, "I thank my God"? You notice how often Paul in the first ten verses mentions the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think it is eleven times. He was full of Christ.

Not only did he love Christ in his heart, but he had Christ's name continually on his tongue, for he was not ashamed of the sweet name of Jesus Christ. Honey in the mouth, music in the ear, heaven in the heart, is that sweet name of Jesus.

**5.** *That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;*

The church of Corinth was a church of all the talents: it was not, however, a church so much of all the graces, and so it was a very poor example for us. I sometimes think that its mode of worship is recorded rather as a warning beacon than as an example to us. It caused, incidentally through the abundance of their gifts and everybody wanting to exercise his gift, great divisions, and there was an absence of humility and love in the church. However, Paul is thankful for what they have.

**6, 7.** *Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

This is a fine trait in their character, they did look to the second Advent; it operated upon them, it helped them in many ways. We cannot now mention all the holy uses which is in the waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it ought to be a good description of all Christian men.

**8, 9.** *Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful,*

Blessed be his name that he is. We are often very unfaithful. Man is always so, but "God is faithful."

**9, 10.** *By whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

Where it is not so, the life of piety seems to ooze away. The blessing of God cannot rest upon a church unless we dwell together in unity, and for unity it is necessary that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

**11-15.** *For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.*

It may have been an accidental circumstance that he did not happen to have baptized then, but he is glad of it, for he says that in the temper they were in, some of them would have made a boast of it.

**16, 17.** *And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel:*

There were other people who could baptize for him: it was enough for that he should concentrate all his energies upon that one matter of preaching the gospel, not that he neglected the divine command, but that it was not necessary that he, any more than his Master, should baptize personally, for we read that “Jesus Christ baptized not, but his disciples.” Not to put a dishonour upon the ordinance, but to let us see that the ordinance does not depend upon the man, but upon that sacred name into which we are baptized, and upon the true faith of the person baptized.

**17.** *Not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*

A very remarkable passage! Paul could have used the wisdom of words. In some of his epistles he gives us a specimen of his mighty rhetoric. He was a born master of speech. There was a touch of

poetry in him, and always a high logical power, but he would not use it in his preaching, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. You may do what you like with human wisdom, put a bit into its mouth and try to lead it into obedience to Christ, but somehow or other its tendency is to rebel against him.

**18-21.** *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God,*

You have only to study the history of the world at the time when Paul was writing, and you will see that the “world, by wisdom knew not God.” It had made itself exceedingly philosophical and sage, but if you weigh its wisest conclusions you will find that they were only polished folly. There is nothing left us of all the wisdom of that period. Time itself has proved it: nay, has disproved it.

**21. 22.** *It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign,*

Some miracle, something that shall attest it in a supernatural way.

**22-24.** *And the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

Beloved, you know how true this is. It has been a wonderful power in you, and this day it is the only wisdom which you desire to possess.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 1:25-31**

In this chapter the apostle magnifies the cross of his Lord, as God’s greatest gift to the world; and as the highest glory of God’s self-revelation to men. He praises God that the Corinthian Christians have experienced the saving grace that comes by faith in the sinner’s sacrifice on Calvary. He rejoices, too, that that same grace has taught them to look forward to the Saviour’s return in glory. But he

is compelled to reprove them for some divisions and rivalries that sprang from their glorying in gifts rather than graces. This leads him to remind them how God had disparaged mere worldly wisdom by saving mankind by the death of Jesus. And he brings all to a very practical application in the verses that we now ponder.

**25.** *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

And yet you will perceive that the church is always looking after wise men after the flesh. If it can find these, it straightway cringes before them, and asks these learned doctors to teach it something more than the simplicities of Christ. This is the old disease of the church. May God cure her yet.

**26.** *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*

There are a few such. Remember how the Countess of Huntingdon used to say that she was very thankful for that letter “m,” for it does not say “not any noble,” but “not many noble are called.”

**27, 28.** *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath 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, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not,*

Seem scarcely to have an existence, not worth notice, not put down in the list of existences.

**28, 29.** *To bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.*

This is what flesh always likes to do. Proud flesh we speak of, and all flesh is such. Flesh has a great tendency to swell, to corrupt; it is easily puffed up; but God will not have it so. What is flesh to God? Did not he make all things? Shall the thing formed boast itself against the Former?

**30.** *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*

In fact, we have everything in Christ; we have in his prophetic office wisdom, in his priestly office righteousness and

sanctification, and in his royal office, in which he paid the price of our salvation, we have redemption.

**31.** *That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

Here is room for glorifying, and it is our duty to glory in God. Let us do so more and more!

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 103. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:25-31.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 3**

**1.** *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*

Their spiritual part had not grown strong, their old carnal nature still had the preponderance, as Paul was obliged to address that which was the bigger half of them.

**2.** *I have fed you with milk,*  
That is a blessing.

**2.** *And not with meat:*

That is not a blessing. It is a great privilege to be fed even with the simple doctrines of grace, with the milk of the gospel; but it is a higher boon to have such a spiritual constitution as to be able to eat the strong meat of the Word.

**2, 3.** *For hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

As ordinary, unregenerate men.

**4.** *For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*

Is not this just how common, ordinary men would do? Where is your spiritual-mindedness if you so act?

**5.** *Who then is Paul,*

Mark, it is Paul himself who asks this question. He puts his own name here in order to show that he does not despise Apollos any more than he despises himself.

**5-9.** *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted,*

*Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that waterereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry.*

Ye are God's tilled ground. Then the apostle works out the same thought under another image turning from agriculture to architecture.

**9, 10.** *Ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon.*

Paul began the churches; he was the first preacher of the gospel in Corinth, and also in other places; and other preachers followed in his footsteps. When a man lays a good foundation, he always feels anxious that those who come after him should build in the same substantial manner as he has begun. It is a great grief to a man if he sees that, after he has laid a foundation of truth, somebody else follows, and builds up an error on the top of it. Alas, men do that still sometimes.

**10-15.** *But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

If he be a good man, he builds for God; though he may build mistakenly, and say much that he ought not to have said. He shall escape, as a man flies out of a burning house, but all his work is gone. What a dreadful thing that would be, at the end of life, to get into heaven, but to have seen that all your life's work had been a failure; to have been building a great deal, but to see it all burned; or to know, as you die, that because it was not God's truth, it would all be burned!

**16, 17.** *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the temple of God,*

—  
For so it should run, —

**17.** *Him shall God destroy;*

If any man should pull down that which Paul built for God, if any man shall pull down that which any faithful minister of Christ has built before him,

“him shall God destroy;”

**17, 18.** *For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.*

For that kind of folly is the doorstep of true wisdom.

**19.** *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.*

All that which calls itself philosophy, and talks about its culture, and so on, is foolishness with God, just as much today as it was among the Greeks.

**19.** *For it is written, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness.*

They call themselves wise, but they shall all be taken in their own craftiness.

**20, 21.** *And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men.*

Men are poor things to glory in.

**21, 23.** *For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*

Glory be to his holy name!

## **1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-16**

**1.** *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*

The church at Corinth consisted of persons of large education and great abilities. It was one of those churches that had given up the one-man system, where everybody talked as he liked — a very knowing church, and a church of Christians, too; but for all that. Christian babies. And though they thought themselves to be so

great, yet the apostle says that he never spoke to them as to spiritual: he kept to the simple elements regarding the carnal part as being too much in them as yet, to be able to drink down spiritual things.

*2. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

How grateful we ought to be that there is milk, and that this milk does feed the soul — that the simplest truths of Christianity contain in them all that the soul wants, just as milk is a diet upon which the body could be sustained, without anything else. Yet how we ought to desire to grow that we may not always be upon milk diet but that we may be able to digest the strong meat — the high doctrine of the deep things of God. These are for men, not for babes. Let the babes be thankful for the milk, but let us aspire to be strong men that we may feed on meat.

*3. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

A united church, you may conclude, is a growing church — perhaps a grown church; but a disunited church, split up into factions where every man is seeking position and trying to be noted such a church is a church of babes. They are carnal, and walk as men.

*4. For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollo; are ye not carnal?*

Instead of that, they should all have striven together for the defense of the common faith of Jesus Christ. There is no greater symptom of mere infancy in true religion than the setting up of the names of leaders or the preference for this or that peculiar form of doctrine, instead of endeavoring to grasp the whole of truth wherever one can find it.

*5, 6. Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*

Let God, then, have all the glory. Be grateful for the planter, and grateful for the waterer, ay, and grateful to them as well; but, still, let the stress of your gratitude be given to him without whom watering and planting would be in vain.

*7, 8. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one:*

They are pursuing the same design; and Apollos and Paul were one in heart. They were true servants of one master.

*8, 9. And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*

The church is built up. God is he who builds it up — the master of the work, but he employs his ministers under him to be builders.

*10-13. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

Very easy to build up a church quickly. Very easy to make a great excitement in religion, and become very famous as a soul-winner. Very easy. But time tries everything. If there were no other fire than the mere fire of time, it would suffice to test a man's work. And when a church crumbles away almost as soon as it is got together when a church declines from the doctrines which it professed to hold, when the teaching of the eminent teacher is proved, after all, to have been fallacious and to have been erroneous in practical results, then what he has built comes to nothing! Oh! dear friends, what little we do we ought to aspire to do for eternity. If you shall never lay the brush to the canvas but once, make an indelible stroke with it. If only one work of sort, shall come from the statuary's workshop, let it be something that will live all down the ages.

But we are in such a mighty hurry: we make a lot of things that die with us ephemeral — results. We are not careful enough as to what we build with. May God grant that this truth may sink into our minds. Let us remember that, if it is hard building with gold and silver, and harder still building with precious stones, yet what is

built will stand the fire. It is easy building with wood, and easier still with hay and stubble, but then there will be only a handful of ashes left of a whole lifework, if we build with these.

**14-15.** *If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

If he meant right — if he did endeavor to serve God as a worker, though he may have uttered many errors and have been mistaken — (and which of us has not been?) — he shall be saved, though his work must be burnt.

**16.** *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

Do you know it? He says, “Know ye not?” but I might leave out the “not” and say, “Know ye that ye are the temple of God?” What a wonderful fact it is! Within the body of the saint, God dwells, as in a temple. How do some men injure their bodies or utterly despise them, though they would not so do if they understood that they are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in them.

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 6:1-24. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-16.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 3:17-23**

**17-18.** *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.*

Do not let him seek to be reckoned wise by the philosophers of the period, who are always against the truth of God. Let him consent to be thought to be a fool; yea, let him know in his own heart that he is not wise; and then let him yield himself up to the wisdom of God. Consciousness of ignorance is the vestibule of knowledge, and he that knows right well that he is a fool is on the way to becoming a wise man. He that would pass into the temple of wisdom must first of all confess his unwisdom.

**19, 20.** *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.*

What a wonderfully small difference there is, after all, between the very cultured man, who thinks himself so, and the man who makes no pretense to it whatever! The knowledge which the wisest man has is about equal, in the presence of God, to the knowledge which one child of three years old has over a child of two years old. To God we must all seem masses of ignorance; and if you could put the whole British Association and all the doctors of divinity, and all the LLD's, and all the men of high degrees together, the things they did not know would make a great many volumes, and the things they did know would not go very far. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain."

**21.** *Therefore let no man glory in men.*

There really is not anything to glory in, in men. "The best of men are men at the best." Never need we exalt ourselves or extol others. "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" "Let no man glory in men."

**21** *For all things are yours;*

Children of God, all men are yours, to serve your highest benefit. All ministers and leaders in Christ are yours to seek your souls' good. Treat them as bees do flowers, and gather honey from them all. "All things are yours."

**22-23,** *Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 13:1-23: 15:13-28. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:17-23.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-14**

**1.** *Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?*

In those days, the courts of law were utterly unjust. It was all a matter of who could bribe the most, for he would gain the suit. I think that we cannot say that it is quite like this at the present time in our law courts, neither can this verse be strictly a rule for the guidance of men in these days, except that, in the spirit of Paul's words, all lawsuits among Christians should be avoided if possible.

**2, 3.** *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?*

Sitting with Christ, at the last great day of judgment, we shall give our “Amen” to the condemnation of the fallen spirits.

**3, 4.** *How much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.*

For they will be better judges than the best of worldly men. Do you set such people to judge your difficult matters? And if you do not, then why do you go to those who are even worse fitted to give a right decision?

**5-11.** *I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionist, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you:*

They were Corinthians, and some of them had fallen into the same sad and shameful condition as the rest of the inhabitants of Corinth. Many of them had been fetched, by almighty grace, out of the very depths of the grossest sin, so that Paul, after giving a list of the blackest sinners, could add, “and such were some of you.”

**11, 12.** *But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient:*

There are some things that I may do; that is, I have the liberty to do them if I please; but I must also consider whether they are expedient, or whether they will damage others, and do mischief to them; for, if so, it will be better for me not to do them, because they are not expedient, even though they are lawful.

**12, 13.** *All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them.*

So, on the one hand, do not make too much of abstaining from this or that, for these things, after all, are but small matters to glory in; but, on the other hand, let no man ever call himself a Christian while he is a slave to any evil habit. What says Paul? “God shall destroy both it and them.” In the previous verse, he says, “I will not be brought under the power of any.” The immortal spirit under the power of materialism? ay, that must never be.

**13, 14.** *Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.*

Our bodies belong to him; therefore, let us think highly of them, and never do anything to injure them; and, especially, let us take care never to let them become instruments of iniquity to the grieving of the blessed Spirit of God.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 9:22-27**

The apostle Paul is here giving a description of the way in which he made everything help toward the fulfillment of his desire to be a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. He longed to be the means of winning souls; he desired that, at the last, his Master might be able to say to him, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant;” And therefore, everything with which he had to do was made to bend in that direction.

**22-24.** *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?*

No matter if twenty or a hundred had entered for the race, “but one receiveth the prize.” Alas! out of these who appear to be running in the Christian ministry, how many will be prizetakers at the last? And out of those who seem to be running the race of the Christian life, how many will win the prize? Ah, Lord, thou knowest!

**24.** *So run, that ye may obtain.*

Do not speculate about what others will do, or not do, but see to your own running: "So run that ye may obtain." Salvation is all of grace; but when a man is saved, he still has to run the Christian race and to be a runner as long as he lives."

**25.** *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.*

Here Paul is alluding to the athletic games and pugilistic encounters of the time. It was a matter of common notoriety that every man, who was going to fight, or wrestle, or run, had to get himself into proper condition, — to "go into training," as we say in similar cases nowadays.

**25.** *Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

The athletes who completed in the Grecian games, passed through great self-denials and mortifications of the flesh, in order that every part of their bodily frame might be tough and strong when they came forward to wrestle, or to run, or to fight. "Now," says Paul, "if they do all that to gain a crown of parsley," — which was generally the crown given, — truly, "a corruptible crown," — "how much more ought we to do in order to win a crown that fadeth not away, — 'an incorruptible crown'!"

**26.** *I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:*

He would not leave a stone unturned, as it were, that he might gain the prize; he put out all his strength in the name of the Lord.

**27.** *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection:*

The Greek word, according to some, implies getting his body into the same position as a man does, when, in a pugilistic encounter, he gets his adversary's head under his arm, and smites him with all his might, So Paul says concerning his body, "I bring it into subjection and take care that it feels the full force of my will." According to other interpreters, the verse may be read, "I drag my body off as a slave;" just as in some of those ancient fights, the victors dragged away their antagonists as slaves, Paul accounted his body to be as a slave to his soul, and dragged it behind him in chains.

*27. Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be castaway.*

The Greek word, which is translated “a castaway” is “adokimos.” It might better have been rendered “disapproved.” It certainly has no such meaning as that which has been generally given to it. Paul was not afraid of being cast away by God at the last. What he aimed at was this, — as he had entered the lists, as a Christian minister, to fight for Christ, to wrestle against principalities and powers, to seek to win souls for Christ, he must keep his bodily powers and passions so in subjection that, at the last, when the prizes were distributed, he would be found to have won his. This is quite another matter from being “a castaway” from salvation and eternal life. Paul was saved and he knew it; and some of us know, to a certainty, that we are saved; but we also know that there is another crown to be won, which the Lord will give to his servants who win in the great fight with sin. To win this crown is our high ambition and we long to hear the Master say to each one of us, in that day, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

### **1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13**

*1-4. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*

You see, then, dear brethren, that the possession of privileges is not everything. Paul would not have us to be ignorant that all those, who were with Moses in the wilderness, had privileges of a very high order. Did they not all pass through the Red Sea, and so escape from their powerful and cruel foes? Did they not all drink of water which gushed forth from the flinty rock? Were they not all fed with manna from heaven? Yet their privileges did not save them, for while they had the five privileges mentioned in these four verses, they fell into the five great sins of which we are about to read; and

so, their privileges, instead of being a blessing to them, only increased their condemnation.

**5, 6.** *But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples,*

—  
Or, warnings, for just as they were overthrown in the wilderness, so may we be, notwithstanding all the gospel privileges which we enjoy, if we are not true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. If the life of Christ is not in our souls, all the privileges of the Church of God cannot save us. “These things were our examples,” —

**6-11.** *To the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; —*

The apostle has told us that before, but he tells it to us again, to warn us, by these beacons, lest we come to a similar destruction to that which befell those ancient unbelievers.

**11, 12.** *And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

We also are to take heed lest we fall, especially those of us who think we are standing securely. You have seen how terrible was the fate of those unbelievers in the wilderness, who never entered into Canaan, but left their carcasses in the desert; now Paul urges us, with such beacons to warn us, to take heed lest we also fall as they did.

**13.** *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

O Lord, fulfill thy gracious purpose unto thy servants! Hold thou us up, lest we fall. We are very weak; keep us, for thy dear Son’s sake! Amen.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-14

**1-4.** *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*

The history of Israel in coming out of Egypt was a very instructive type of the history of the visible Church of Christ. They were in slavery in Egypt as all men are in bondage to sin and Satan. They were brought out of Egypt as all the redeemed are delivered by the almighty grace of God. With a high hand and an outstretched arm, the Lord brought Israel out of the house of bondage; and, by a very wonderful baptism, “in the cloud and in the sea,” they commenced their career as God’s separated people. Then they all shared in the same spiritual ordinances: “They did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink.” Yet, for all that, they were not all God’s people. They were so nominally, and visibly; but they were not all really so. And, as there was a mixed multitude that came up out of Egypt, together with the true seed of promise, so is there an alien element in every church at this present day. Among those who have been baptized into Christ, there are still some who, while they eat the spiritual meat and drink the spiritual drink, yet for all that have not been brought into true communion with Christ, and do not in reality know the Lord.

**5.** *But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*

There was no evidence of faith in many of them, and “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Is it not a sad thing that, in a people so highly favored as they were, there should have been so large a proportion of those who had not the faith which renders men pleasing unto God? So they did literally come out into the wilderness to die there, and they never entered into the rest of God.

**6.** *Now these things were our examples, to the intent we —*

We professed Christians,— we, church-members,—

**6.** *Should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.*

They gave way to their carnal appetites; they craved for meat when God had already given them angels' food. Now, if we act like this, we cannot be pleasing unto God.

*7. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.*

That is, to go through those unclean rites and ceremonies before their idols which are here called, "play." Ah, dear friends, may God keep us from the worship of anything which we can see with our eyes, or hear with our ears! Stay we never become idolaters! You know, we can very easily make idols of our children; we can make idols of our own persons, we can make idols of our talents, of our respectability, and so forth. But, oh! it matters not what the idol is; it is no more pleasing to God if it be of silver and gold than if it were of the mud of the river. No: "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them."

*8. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.*

Fornication in God's people is peculiarly black and filthy. In the ordinary man of the world, it is evil enough; but when a man professes to be a Christian, he must flee from even the very thought of it, and keep himself chaste, for his body is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Oh, may none of us ever come anywhere near to this great evil, but in purity of heart may we walk before our God!

*9. Neither let me tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.*

I cannot stay to mention the many ways in which we can tempt Christ; but we can readily do so still. What a dreadful doom it was to be destroyed by serpents! Yet is it not very wonderful that, in connection with this great sin, and its awful punishment, the brazen serpent was lifted high, that whosoever looked to it might live? And now, if any have tempted Christ by presumptuous sin, by their delay, or by their infidelity, let them bless God that they are not yet destroyed of serpents, because Christ has been lifted up even as the serpent of brass was exalted above the camp of Israel.

Remember our Lords' words to Nicodemus: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

**10.** *Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.*

It is a dreadful habit to get into,— that of complaining against God. Occasional murmuring is doubtless sinful, but habitual murmuring becomes a very great evil. I am afraid that there are some who cavil at God’s providence, and cavil at his Word, till they come to be cavillers and nothing else; and what good is a man who can do nothing else but carp, and cavil, and criticize? O beloved, “neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.”

**11.** *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples:*

They were like a ‘book in which we might read our own history in large characters. We see ourselves foreshadowed in them, and we read our happiness or our misery in their behaviour.

**11, 12.** *And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

For if he begins to think that he stands, it may be that it is nothing but his own imagination; there may be no real standing about it. And there is no surer sign of the falsity of a man’s estimate of himself than the fact that it is a high one. He that thinks himself good has not begun to be good, for the door of the palace of wisdom is humility, and the gate of the temple of virtue is lowliness of mind.

**13, 14.** *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.*

I should like to see this verse put over the top of every “sacramental” table in every “church” in England: “Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.” If this text were properly understood, every crucifix would be broken to pieces, and the altars themselves would be cleared away to make room for what should be there,— the table of the Lord; and we should have no more worship of visible things, which is idolatry. O ye who are the dearly-beloved of God, flee from it! Keep as far from it as ever you can. I remember reading of a man of God who was the rector of a certain parish, and who had in the church a very ancient sad famous painted window of

which he was somewhat proud. In the design there was a representation of the Godhead,— the Father was there, and oh, how blasphemous! — he was represented as an aged man; and, one day, this clergyman, who had seen no evil in the window, heard a rustic explaining to a companion that that was the God whom they worshipped. The rector did not deliberate for a moment, but he threw a stone right through that part of the painted window. I suppose that was an offence against the law of man, but certainly it was not against the law of God. He would never have that figure replaced on any account whatever, and I think that he did well: “Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.” Put it out of your sight; do not tamper with it, but hate it with a perfect hatred. In God’s eyes, it is one of the most fearful of sins. He has said, “I the Lord thy God am a jealous God,” and he will have nothing to come between us and the pure and simple worship of his invisible self.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 10:15-33, AND 11:1**

**1 Corinthians 10:15-19.** *I Speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?*

After they had offered the beasts as sacrifices to their idols, it was the custom to sell the carcasses in the shambles. Christian men, going into the market to buy meat, and asking no questions, bought and ate portions of these sacrifices, and they did no wrong whatever. But there were some in the church who were very tender of conscience, and who said, “If we eat meat which has been offered to idols, we thereby become partakers with the idolaters.” Paul therefore writes:—

**20, 21.** *But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils:*

It cannot be; there must be a separation between these two things. We cannot have any delight in idol-worship, and yet worship the Christ of God.

**21-28.** *Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devil. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he? All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever, is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof:*

So, you see, you may eat the meat if you like, for the idol is nothing at all; but, still, if you are told that it is meat that has been offered to idols, and that you by eating of it seem to join in the worship of idols, abstain from doing it, not for your own sake, but for the sake of the man who might be caused to stumble through you. This is a safe rule with regard to Christian behaviour in many other things. There may be things lawful in drink as well as in meat, which a man may take without sinning; but if he knows that his example leads others astray, then let him take heed that he does not set such an example. An example which is an excuse for drunkenness is not a good one; therefore, let none of us set it before the eyes of men. If any man say to you, "This meat has been offered in sacrifice to idols," "eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

**29.** *Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?*

That man may not be able to do it without injury to himself, but I may, and I have liberty so to do; but yet, as a Christian man, I am to consider his want of power, and I am not to use my liberty lest I do harm to my brother.

**30, 31.** *For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

And if anything you might do would not glorify God, do not do it.

**32, 33.** *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

**1 Corinthians 11:1.** *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 9., AND 1 CORINTHIANS 10:15-33, AND 11:1.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34**

The members of the church at Corinth abounded in gifts, and therefore they thought it meet for each one to speak to edification. They had no pastoral oversight whatever; acting, in this respect, like certain brethren whom we know nowadays. The result, however, was very deplorable. They do not appear to have been able even to conduct the Lord's supper without the most disorderly proceedings. Church discipline was utterly forgotten or neglected; and it seems as if the two Epistles to the Corinthians are given to us as beacons to warn us against that form of worship, seeing that it produces such mischievous and sad results.

**17.** *Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.*

It is a very bad state of things when we meet for worship, and separate without any improvement, or, like these Corinthians, "come together, not for the better, but for the worse."

**18.** *For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.*

It was very gracious and kind on the apostle's part to put it so mildly, and he sets us the example of not believing anything against our brethren too quickly: "I partly believe it."

**19-21.** *For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come*

*together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*

They seem to have regarded it as a common feast, to which they brought their own provisions; and, without waiting for each other, they disgraced the table of the Lord by their scandalous proceedings.

**22.** *What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in these? I praise you not.*

No doubt they hoped to be praised, and expected that they had done everything in the right way; perhaps, they even believed that they were acting under the inspiration of the Spirit, and therefore could not do anything wrong; but the apostle deals very faithfully with them, and tells them how the supper is to be celebrated. How much we have gained by the mistakes of others! As the inspired apostle is guided to inform us as to the right mode of observing this ordinance, we may almost be thankful that the Corinthians fell into error concerning it, much as we may regret their faults on their own account.

**23,24.** *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

These are the words of the Lord Jesus himself, and therefore they come to us with all the weight of his infallible authority. Then Paul continues:

**25, 26.** *After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

“Show” or “proclaim.” The latter is the better word: “Ye do proclaim the Lord's death till he come.” That last phrase ought finally to settle the question of the perpetuity of the Lord's supper, which is to be observed “till he come.”

*27. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

“Unworthily,” that is, in a thoughtless, careless way; or with a view to worldly gain, as some used to take it in order to obtain office under government; and as some, doubtless, do take it, to obtain the alms of the church. Such an unworthy participation is a sin against the very body and blood of the Lord.

*28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

Paul does not say, “Let a man examine himself, and then not eat or drink at the communion.” The examination should lead him to repentance, and to faith, and should then bring him to the table of fellowship in the right state of mind and heart. The examination is not a door to shut him out from the ordinance, but a door at which he may pause awhile, to see whether he is in a right condition to enter; and if he is not, he should seek to be made so, and then enter.

*29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.*

“Eateth and drinketh judgment to himself,” for “judgment” is the word here used by the apostle.

*30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

It appears that God visited this church at Corinth with sickness, and took away many of the members by death, because they had profaned the Lord’s table, and had walked in a disorderly manner before him. Paul did not mean to say that these persons were lost; but he intended to remind their fellow-members, and all who might read his Epistle, that God visits churches after this fashion with discipline and chastening because of the unseemly conduct which is always so offensive to him.

*31, 32. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*

So, you see, that chastening process, which is going on in the church, is all in love: “that we should not be condemned with the world;” just as a father exercises discipline in his household, and

uses chastisement that his children may never disobey the laws of the realm. They will never come before the police court, for they are kept under proper control at home, and are tutored and trained by their father's wise government. So we come not under the judgment of the law, as the world itself comes; we come under the disciplinary treatment of the great Head of the Church, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

**33, 34.** *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

Now let us read Luke's account of the institution of this supper; as we do so, it will be well for us to remember that Luke was a friend and intimate companion of Paul.

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34; AND LUKE 22:14-24.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 11:18-34.**

**18-22.** *For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*

These Corinthians fell into a great many errors. Everybody was a speaker, and said whatever he pleased; and they had no proper order or rule. Among other evils, when they met together to observe the Lord's Supper, they brought their own food with them, thinking that eating thus together was keeping the sacred feast. So the richer ones feasted to the full, and the poor went almost without anything. "One is hungry, and another is drunken," says the apostle, and he tells them that this was not the right way of observing the Lord's Supper. Yet it is evident that the idea which was in their mind was that of feasting together. They had exaggerated it, and carried it to a grievous excess; but that was the idea they had concerning it.

Certainly, there was no altar, or priest, or anything of the sort. Now the apostle tells them how the ordinance should be observed.

**23-25.** *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. How wonderfully simple it all is! There is nothing here of the paraphernalia of a "sacrament." It is a simple memorial festival, that is all.

**26, 27.** *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

He shall be guilty with respect to that body, — not with respect to that bread, against which he cannot sin, — but with respect to that body which is represented by the bread, and with respect to that blood which is represented by the cup. See with what holy solemnity this humble feast is fenced and invested. There is a divinity which doth hedge the simple ordinance of Christ lest men should trifle with it to their eternal ruin.

**28, 29.** *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

"Judgment" or "condemnation" is the word in the original, not "damnation." That is not a fair translation, neither does it express the truth. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily condemns himself in so doing, he comes under judgment for that act. This is the kind of judgment that falls upon Christians if they come unworthily to the Lord's table: —

**30-32.** *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*

Believers, who are rendered sick, or who even die, because of their offence against the Lord's ordinance, are not therefore condemned to hell. Far from it; it is that they may not be so condemned that God visits them. "When we" the people of God — "are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

**33, 34.** *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

By due attention to the apostle's injunctions, they would be able rightly to observe the ordinance; and we also may learn, from what Paul wrote, how we may worthily come to the table of our Lord.

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 26:17-30; AND 1 CORINTHIANS 11:18-34.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-26**

**20.** *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.*

Merely meeting together, each person bringing his or her own portion of bread and wine, and each one eating the provided portion, was not celebrating the Lord's supper.

**21.** *For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*

Bad as some professing Christians are even now, they are not so bad as these Corinthians were. One was hungry, and another was drunken, because they had turned the holy feast into a kind of banquet of a most disorderly sort. There was nothing in their conduct to indicate true Christian fellowship. The very meaning of the ordinance was lost in the fact that each one was feasting himself without fear.

**22.** *What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*

The Lord's supper is not to be made an opportunity for eating and drinking in disorderly self-enjoyment. It is a hallowed and holy institution, setting forth the fellowship of true believers with one

another, and with the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was an apostle, yet he had not been present at the institution of the Lord's supper, so he had a special revelation given to him concerning the way in which this ordinance is to be observed.

**23.** *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you,—*

That is the right kind of teaching which a man first receives from God, and then delivers to the people. Nothing is of authority in the Christian ministry unless we can say of it, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," —

**23.** *That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: —*

What a pathetic interest is given to the Lord's supper by the fact that it was instituted "the same night in which he was betrayed." Never forget that God grant that none of us may betray our Lord this night, or any other night! It would be the darkest night in our life should it ever be so: "The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:" —

**24, 25.** *And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament —*  
"The New Covenant" —

**25, 26.** *In my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 26:20-30; And 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-26.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34**

**20, 21.** *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*

They seem to have brought their own provisions to the assembly, and to have made a feast thereof, and they even thought that was an observance of the Lord's supper. They differed in social position; and, consequently, one had little and another much, and

some even went to excess so that they were actually “drunken.” Paul might well rebuke such unseemly conduct.

**22.** *What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, —*

“Do you think that, as a nominally Christian assembly, you are constituted merely that you may eat and drink? ‘What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God,’” —

**22.** *And shame them that have not?*

“Making the poor who come to the gathering feel their poverty by observing the superiority of your provisions to their own.”

**22, 23.** *What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, —*

“And therefore you ought not to have gone astray. I told you how to observe this ordinance, so you have wilfully erred. This is what I delivered unto you,” —

**23-27.** *That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, —*

That is, from wrong motives, without sincere faith and devotion to God, —

**27-29.** *Shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.*

You notice that I introduced the word “condemnation” instead of “damnation.” That word does not correctly give the meaning of the original; it is not damnation, but condemnation, or judgment, as is clear from that which follows.

**30.** *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

There is no doubt that God visited upon the Corinthians, in the way of chastisement, their want of reverence at his table; many were weak and sickly among them, and many died. They were not lost if they were believers in Christ, but the church at Corinth sustained a great loss through their departure; and I have no doubt that God still exercises a singular discipline over his own people. They that are without are, to a large extent, left to sin as they please; their punishment will fall upon them hereafter; but the child of God cannot be allowed to do so, and he shall be chastened for his sin. The Lord still says to his spiritual Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." A father may let another man's child alone, but his own boy shall not transgress without smarting for it. Such conduct as is here described does not bring damnation, for there is no damnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; but it does bring the chastening with which God visits his children when they walk contrary to him.

**31.** *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

But when a church has lost its conscience, and gets into such a state as this Corinthian church fell into, then, as it does not judge itself, God judges it, and chastens it severely.

**32.** *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*

Perhaps somebody thought just now, "I do not want to be in the Church of Christ if it gets special chastening." That is one among many reasons why I do want to be in the Church of Christ, for "we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

**33, 34.** *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 26:17-30; AND 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34

**20, 21.** *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*

They had such low notions of the communion that they seemed to think that, if they ate together, each one bringing his own provision, they would be celebrating the Lord's supper; but Paul would not agree to that. What said he?

**22.** *What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*

They may not have meant to do so ill, but they had fallen into all sorts of disorder, and Paul therefore first rebuked them, and then explained to them the right observance of the ordinance.

**23-27.** *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

Note carefully the wording, of this verse; it is not "Whosoever, being unworthy, shall eat and drink. It is not an adjective, it is an adverb; and relates, not so much to the person, as to the way in which he came to the communion. Those who came to the Lord's table in a half-drunken fashion, those who regarded it merely as a common meal, those who came there under false pretences, those who came there not thinking of Christ's body at all; they would all be guilty of not discerning the Lord's body, and so of prostituting his ordinance, robbing it of its dignity and solemnity by coming there in such a condition.

**28, 29.** *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, —*

We are all unworthy to come to the table of our Lord; who among us can possibly be thought to be worthy to come to such a feast as this? But the apostle is writing concerning those who came there carelessly, or without thought, or with a wrong motive. Years ago, you know, nobody could hold certain government or municipal offices without taking what was called “the sacrament.” That was making the Lord’s supper a picklock to office; that was indeed to eat and drink it unworthily. Such also as come merely for the sake of getting alms, or out of custom or formality, but leave their hearts behind them, eat and drink unworthily, and “shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,” — as guilty as they were who actually crucified the Saviour. “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily” —

**29.** *Eateth and drinketh “condemnation” to himself, —*

For that is how the word should be rendered, —

**29, 30.** *Not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

God is always carrying out a system of discipline in his Church. To a large extent, he lets the world, for the present, sin, as it pleases; but in his own family he uses the rod; and when the Lord’s supper is dishonoured, there is no doubt that the sickness and sleep here mentioned still follow.

**30.** *“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”*

Many even die; — not that they are lost, — not that this sickness is sent as a curse, but as fatherly chastisement; and the death of many of its members is often a chastisement to the church which is thus weakened by losing its best helpers.

**31-34.** *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 26:17-39; AND 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34**

**20, 21.** *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*

These Corinthians had fallen into a very queer state. I do not think that any Baptist Church that I have ever known of has acted in this fashion; but when churches have no ministers, when there is an open ministry where everybody talketh and nobody listeneth, they fall into a queer condition, especially into divisions and heart-breaking strifes. It was so in the case of this church at Corinth. Here everybody brought his own provision, and some ate to the full, and others had not enough; and they thought that they were observing "the Lord's supper."

**22.** *What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?*

There is your proper place if you want a meal. Go home, and eat and drink; do not come to the sanctuary for such a purpose: "Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?"

**22.** *Or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you,*

He had received it by a special revelation, Poor Paul was brought in late, and he was like one born out of due time. He had not been present in the upper room with Christ at the first famous breaking of bread; so the Lord came and gave him a special revelation concerning this sacred feast, so that, whenever he spoke or wrote to any of the churches about the Lord's supper, he could say, "I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you."

**23.** *That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

The Lord's supper is a simple service of remembrance. Nothing is said about an altar, or a priest, or a sacrifice. Our Lord took bread, gave thanks for it, brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do in

remembrance of me.” Mark that “this do”; it will not be right to do something else instead of this; and we must not do this for any other purpose than the one he mentions, “This do in remembrance of me.” This command raises a previous question, “Do we know him?” we cannot remember Christ if we do not know him.

**25.** *After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.*

“By Christ redeemed, in Christ restored,  
We keep the memory adored,  
And show the death of our dear Lord,  
Until he come!

“And thus that dark betrayal-night,  
With the last advent we unite;  
By one blest chain of loving rite,  
Until he come!”

**27.** *Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.*

If such a man has treated “this bread” and “this cup” with contempt, he has treated “the body and blood of the Lord” with contempt; it shall be so reckoned to him. Many have been troubled by this verse. They have said, “We are unworthy.” You are, this is quite true; but the text does not say anything about your being unworthy. Paul uses an adverb, not an adjective. His words are, “Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily,” that is, in an unfit way, to gain something by it, as men used to take what they called “the sacrament” to get into certain offices, or as some come to the communion-table for the sake of the charitable gifts that are for the poor of the church; this is to eat and drink “unworthily.” To come carelessly, to come contemptuously, to say, “I do not care whether I am a Christian, or not; but I shall come to the communion,” this is to eat and drink “unworthily.” Notice the ly; we are all unworthy of this sacred feast, and if unworthiness could shut us out, who would dare to be here?

**28.** *But let a man examine himself,*

Let a man look himself up and down, as a lawyer cross-questions a witness, as a man examines money to see whether it has the true ring of gold about it; or not: "Let a man examine himself."

**28.** *And so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

Let him come as a true believer, as sincere; if not perfect, yet true; if not all he ought to be, yet in Christ; if not all he wants to be, yet still on the way to it, by being in Christ, who is "the way, the truth and the life."

**29.** *For he that eateth, and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

He does not see the meaning of the emblem of Christ's death.. He degrades the symbol by making it take the place of the thing signified. He sees the bread, but not the body; and he damnifies himself, condemns himself, by such eating. He is a loser rather than a gainer by eating and drinking unworthily.

**30.** *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

Persons coming to the Lord's table in an improper spirit are very apt to come under God's discipline; some will be taken ill; and some will die. This discipline is being carried on in every true church of God. God's providence will work in this way if many treat the table of the Lord as the Corinthians did, acting as if it were a common place for eating and drinking. Many of them were weak and sickly, and many died.

**31.** *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

If we are God's people, we shall be judged by him here for our wrongdoing. We shall not be like the world that is left to the day of judgment; but we shall be judged now. God will visit with temporal judgments those of his children who sin against him.

**32.** *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*

You know that a man will see a great deal that is wrong in children in the street, and say nothing about it; but if it is his own who is up to mischief, he will give him a sweet taste of the rod. So, if you belong to God, you cannot sin deeply without having a present judgment, a present discipline; and you ought to be thankful for it, painful though it may seem to be for the time, for "when we

are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

**33.** *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.*

How gently Paul talks to these Corinthians! They deserve to be scolded; but he is very tender with them. He says, “If you must come together in this way, at least have the good manners to stop for one another; and if you do come to the communion of the Lord, treat it with that respect and reverence which it deserves.

**34.** *And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

May we tonight keep this feast in due order under the power of the Holy Spirit, and may we find a blessing in it to God’s praise! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 26:26-30; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34

## **1 CORINTHIANS 12, AND 13:1-3**

**1, 2.** *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.*

Although the members of the church at Corinth were highly favored with spiritual gifts, they do not seem to have known how to use them. Paul points out to them, in this chapter, how ignorant they were concerning the very gifts which they possessed. They did not know how to put them to proper use in the service of God. The apostle therefore reminds these gift-exalted Corinthians that, only a little while before, they were heathens, carried away by falsehood and superstition, and worshipping dumb idols. They had nothing, therefore, to boast of; and it is probable that, if we also look back to the hole of the pit whence we were dug, we shall find no more occasion for boasting than they had.

**3.** *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed:*

I suppose that, in their assemblies, where everybody talked who liked, there were some people who even spoke blasphemy. They

professed to be under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and yet they stood up, and called Jesus accursed. Where there is no rule nor order, there is pretty sure to be something very mischievous before long. Paul gives them to understand that this kind of talk could not go unrebuked.

**3.** *And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*

If a man really knows Jesus as his Lord, and he declares that truth, then you may fully accept it as being in harmony with the teaching of the Spirit of God

**4-7.** *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

It is given in order that he may himself profit, and also that he may be the means of profiting those who hear him.

**8.** *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom;*

He is prudent,—an experienced man—fit to lead the young, and the feeble, and those who are less instructed than he himself is.

**8.** *To another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;*

He has a wide range of practical acquaintance with God's Word; and though he may not be so judicious as the brother who was just mentioned, yet he is a man of knowledge.

**9.** *To another faith by the same Spirit;*

Paul probably means here some special kind of faith; perhaps, the faith that enabled its possessor to work miracles.

**9, 10.** *To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits;*

So that he is able to detect the impostors who come even into the nominal Church of Christ. They did come then, and they will continue to come even to the end.

**10, 11.** *To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

Whatever Our gifts as a church, or as individuals, may be, they all come from the selfsame Spirit. This should tend to promote unity amongst us. Let us all trace whatever gift we have to the hand that gave it, and to the Spirit that wrought it; let us feel that we are so many pipes connected with one fountain; and, therefore, as all the good that we convey comes from the one source, let us give all the honour and glory of it to the Spirit of God from Whom it comes.

**12.** *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*

That, is to say, Christ visible—the Church of Christ. We are members of his mystical body. He is the Head; but all who are quickened by the Spirit of God are one with him.

**13, 14.** *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.*

By the way in which some people act, you might almost imagine that the body was one member, and that the one member was a tongue; but it is not so. God never intended that, in the assembly, all should speak. Let those speak to whom he has given the power to speak. He does not lay all burdens upon one back; let each man bear the personal burden which God has placed upon his back.

**15.** *If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*

Where are you, dear child of God, who are in the position of the foot? Have you been comparing yourself with some eminent Christian, who did much in his Master's service; and have you sorrowfully asked, "Why can not I do what he did? I am only a poor foot, always touching the ground, often limping, and frequently needing to be washed." Well, suppose you could be made into a hand, it might be a gain to you in some respects, but it might be a loss to the rest of the body. It would certainly be a loss to any of you if your feet were to be turned into hands, for you have need of feet; and the Church, which is here called by the name of Christ, needs its feet as much as it needs its hands. The mercy is that even if you have, in your anxiety,—perhaps I ought to say, in your unbelief,—been saying, "Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body," it

does not matter what you have said, for that does not alter the fact. "Is it therefore not of the body?" Of course, it is of the body still, whatever it may say.

**16.** *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*

Oh, by no means! The ear has its proper purpose to fulfill; it is designed for a special service in the body, which no other member can render. We must never compare ourselves among ourselves, and wish to be somebody else. You are bad enough as you are, dear friend, but you would probably be much worse if you were somebody else. You may think that you are a very poor ear, but you would decidedly make a much worse eye. Even if your ear is dull of hearing, it can, at any rate, hear better than it can see. It can do its own work better than it could do the work of any other member of the body; and so can you as a member of Christ's mystical body.

**17, 18.** *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

That is the best rule for each part of our body: "as it hath pleased him." Could any of you suggest a better place for your eyes than where they are? We have read the old heathen fable of a giant who had one eye in the middle of his forehead; and whenever I have seen his portrait sketched by fancy, I have felt at once, that it was no improvement upon the human face. No, the eye is best where it is; so is the ear, and so is the mouth. They are all best just where they are. So are you, my brother or my sister, best where you are, if you are in the place where God evidently meant you to be.

**19.** *And if they were all one member, where were the body?*

There would be no body at all

**20, 21.** *But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee:*

You know how very quick the hand always is to go up to the eye when it is in danger. You do not have to wait to tell it what to do; but, in an instant, the hand is up, for there is a fellow feeling between the members of the same body. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee." And the hand never feels that it

may leave the eye to take care of itself; it is ready at once to protect it.

**21-23.** *Nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.*

They are covered and concealed; and so we take more trouble with them than we do with other parts of our body.

**24.** *For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:*

Here is a lesson for us with regard to church-fellowship,—always to take most notice of those who are the least noticeable, and to be most gentle with those who require the most tenderness. You know that there are some of our fellow-members who are not all we should like them to be. We believe that they are children of God; but they are, somehow or other, “cut on the cross.” They are crotchety, and weak in many ways. Now, we should try, as far as ever we can, to adapt ourselves to them. If you have ever had the gout very badly, you know that, if a person walks across the room too heavily, you feel it. Do you, therefore, say to your father, when he is thus laid aside, “You cannot expect me to take notice of such a thing as that? Nor would you be so cruel as to say to anybody else, “If he has a gouty foot, I cannot help it, and I shall tread on it every now and then.” No; you are not so brutal as that. So, if there be a member of the body that is more tender than the rest, and especially if that tenderness is the result of disease, let us try to minister to it as far as ever we possibly can. Let us give “more abundant honour to that part which lacked.”

**25.** *That there should be no schism in the body;*

That is, no division, no rent in the body.

**25, 26.** *But that the members should have the same care one for another.*

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. I am afraid that this second half of the verse refers to a duty which is

more neglected than is the other. It is an easier thing to suffer with those that suffer than it is to rejoice with those that rejoice; and I will tell you why it is so; because, in giving compassion to those that suffer, you have some sense of dignity. Condescension is often a sort of pride; but when a brother is better off than you are,—when he has more talent than you have,—when he is more successful than you are,—for you to go and rejoice with him, and be as glad as if it were all your own gladness,—ay, to enter into his joy, and say, “God be thanked, my brother, for thy prosperity! I would increase it if I could, for I feel that I am a partner with you;”—ah! this needs great grace. So, may God give us more grace continually, and deliver us from everything like envy, which is of Satan, and yet is all too common even among professing Christians.

**27-31.** *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-3.** *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

God grant us grace, then, that we may abound in this most excellent grace of a true Christian life, which is infinitely more essential than the highest gifts or the most remarkable talents that God himself can bestow upon us?

### **1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31**

**12, 13.** *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is*

*Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

Oh, what a sacred oneness that is which subsists between all the Lord's people! We are not simply brethren, but we are one; we are not allied by affinity, but by actual identity; we are parts of the same body; we are brought into spiritual membership with each other, as real and as effectual as that membership which subsists between the various parts of the body. Yet we are not all alike, although we are all of one body; some are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are bond, some are free; and yet, in some things, we are all alike, for we have all been baptized by one Spirit. And, moreover, we have all been made to drink into one Spirit; we have had one spiritual baptism, and we have had one spiritual drinking. Would to God that we felt more one, that our hearts beat more in tune with each other; that we had a sympathy with each other in woes and sufferings; that we had a fellow feeling with all who love the Lord; and could at all times weep with those that weep, as well as rejoice with those that rejoice

**14, 15.** *For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*

Do not get comparing yourself with others, and saying, "Ah! if I were such-and-such a person, I might then think myself to be part of Christ's body." No, you might not; if you were just like him. As there are only certain members of a sort in a man's body, so, by a parity of reasoning, there would not be more than a certain number of members alike in the mystical body. We do not imagine that there will be many members of this body, the Church, of one class, or of one character; so that, if you are different from others, you are filling a different office in the body. You may, from that fact, rather draw an inference of comfort than one of sorrow and despondency. Even should you say, "Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, are you therefore not of the body?" Oh, no! you are of the body still, though you do not think that you are.

**16, 17.** *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?*

If we were all preachers, if we could all see into God's truth, and set it forth in a public manner, where should we get our congregations?

**17.** *If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*

There must be different members to fill different offices. If we were all so one that there was no distinction whatever, if we were all of one rank, all of one age, all of one standing, the body would be incomplete.

**18-21.** *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

Brethren, you sometimes think there are some belonging to the Church whom we could well spare; but there is not one superfluous member in the whole body. If they be truly united to Christ, they have all their offices, all their places. There is not a poor old woman, who has not been able to get up to the house of prayer for several years, who is not of some use to the Church; for she lies upon her bed, and there she intercedes with God. There is not: a member of the Church so humble, so illiterate, so uninstructed, that he or she may not be of essential service to the whole body. There is some little part, my brother, which you are to take in the great Church of Christ; you may not be able always to tell what it may be, but still there is a place for you to fill. There is a linchpin in a chariot; who thinks much about or thanks that pin? Indeed, it is so very small and insignificant, who would imagine it is necessary to the locomotion or speed? The wheels carry it round, but who would suppose that, if it were taken away, the wheel would fly off? Perhaps you are like one of these little linchpins which keep the wheel right; you may not know what use you are; but, possibly, you prevent someone else from turning aside. Let us each keep in our station, endeavoring, God helping us, to exert the influence which he has given us.

**22-24.** *Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant*

*comeliness. For our comely parts have no need but God both tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:*

A moment's thought will tell you that those parts of our frame which are tenderest are the most necessary parts; and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these, by clothing them more than other parts, we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; for our comely parts have no need of being covered, and therefore we leave them exposed.

**25.** *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*

We have heard this text urged by some who are in the Church of England as a proof that we are wrong in departing from it. They tell us that there should be no schism in the body; we beg to tell them that there is no schism in the body that we know of. We do not belong to their body, and therefore we make no schism in that body, we are quite clear of them. We have neither stick, nor stone, nor part, nor lot in their State Establishment; therefore we do not create a schism in the body. When they divide themselves into Puseyites and Evangelicals, they make a schism in their own body; but, as long as we are all united, as long as the members of a church walk together in unity, there is no schism in the body. We are different bodies altogether. They say that a schismatic is one who departs from a Church, and makes a rent from it; by no means, a schismatic is one who makes a rent in it, not from it. We, I say, are not schismatics. Those who are in the Church, and yet do not agree with its fundamental principles and its Articles of Faith, they are schismatics; but we are not.

**26.** *And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it;*

Is that true of our churches? I am afraid not. The members of the one Church of Christ have not been brought to that unity of feeling and sympathy which they ought to have.

**26-30.** *Or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all*

*prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?*

God intended that there should be different offices in his Church; let us look on each other as being different, and yet united in the common faith of Christ.

**31.** *But covet earnestly the best gifts:*

I would not wish you, brother, to repress your aspirations after these blessings; I am most anxious that you should earnestly desire and seek to possess a large share of all these spiritual endowments.

**31.** *And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

Which is, holding the truth in love, and walking in charity one toward another.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 13**

**1.** *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*

If there be no love to God, and no love to man, the vital element is wanting. Whatever sound we make if the Word of God is not in us, it is a sound that has no meaning, conveys no heavenly meaning. "I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." What if any of us who bear witness for Christ with our tongues should be found to be no better than this?

**2.** *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

Judas had, no doubt, faith in God's miracles, but yet he was not saved. Selfishness was his ruling motive; he had no love to God or man. How this clips the wings of those lofty ones who hover on high, boasting of their knowledge and of their gifts! There are many who have few gifts —obscure and unknown — who love God much, and these are the accepted ones. Before God the balances of the sanctuary are rather turned by the shekel of love, than by any weight of talent or position.

**3.** *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

Love is a matter of the heart, and if the heart be not right with God, external acts, though they are very similar to the highest acts that flow from love, are of no service. God requires the heart to be right, and if that be not right, whatever cometh out of us is not acceptable in his sight.

**4, 5.** *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*

Always try to put the best construction on other people's actions and work. Let gentleness triumph.

**6-11.** *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

Much of what we call knowledge, much of what we call eloquence, will all be put away. As our spiritual growth shall increase, we shall not want these childish things.

**12, 13.** *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three;*

Three abiding graces. Some have said that faith and hope will not be found in heaven. Why not? Why not? It seems to me there will be plenty of room for them — plenty of space for them. Am I to be an unbeliever when I get to heaven then? Am I not to believe when my disembodied spirit goes to heaven? Am I not to believe in the resurrection of the dead? Am I not hopefully to expect it? Am I not in heaven to believe in the second advent of Christ? Am I not to be hoping for it? Am I not to believe in the complete conquest of Christ, and that he shall reign from the river, even to the ends of the earth? And am I not to hope for it? To miss faith and hope in heaven were to miss two things which the Apostle expressly tells us are the abiding things.

**13.** *But the greatest of these is charity.*

It is the highest, the pinnacle. It is not the foundation — that is faith. Just as a rose in full bloom is greater than the stem that bears it, so, whilst faith is most needful, and hope most cheering, love is the most beautiful and brightest of the three.

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 CORINTHIANS 13; EPHESIANS 1.

**1 CORINTHIANS 15**

**1, 2.** *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

What was this gospel, of which Paul thought so highly, and which he says is the means of our salvation? Did it consist in sundry doctrinal statements? No, it contained doctrinal statements, but it did not consist entirely of them. Here is Paul's declaration concerning the gospel: —

**3.** *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;*

This is the solid basis of the gospel.

**4.** *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

This is the very keystone of the gospel arch, — the Christ who died on the cross, and was buried in Joseph's tomb, "rose again the third day according to the scriptures." This great truth of Christ's resurrection is so important that Paul dwells upon it at length.

**5.** *And that he was seen of Cephas,*

Peter saw him.

**5, 6.** *Then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present,*

When the epistle was written.

**6-8.** *But some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

There is no fact, in all history, that is so well attested as the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Whether there ever was

such a person as Julius Caesar might be contested, though there were, doubtless, thousands of witnesses who saw him, and many who wrote about him; but as to whether Christ rose from the dead, no candid mind can entertain a doubt. He was seen by great companies of believers and by various individuals who had long known him most intimately, and who had many opportunities of judging whether they were deceived or not. Christ's resurrection is not only so well attested, but it is also the most important fact that ever happened in the history of the world, as Paul goes on to show.

**9-14.** *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*

“We are deceivers, and you are deceived, and the whole Christian system crumbles into dust unless Christ did really rise from the dead.”

**15.** *Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.*

Between Christ and his people, there is a union which can never be broken; so that, if he rose from the dead, they also must rise. If we are one with him, who shall separate us? And if we cannot be separated, then we must share and share alike with him.

**16-19.** *For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable.*

To have been quickened into a life which gives great pain and sorrow would be a miserable thing if this were not compensated by the hope of glory which that life has brought to us. A man who has been always poor can bear his poverty; but let him taste of wealth

and luxury for a while, and then go back to penury, and how keen is the pang he feels. And let a man be quickened to know God, and to rejoice in the new life, and then be told that there is no hereafter, and he is, indeed, “of all men most miserable.”

**20-22.** *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

All that were in Adam died in Adam, and all that are in Christ live in Christ and shall rise in Christ.

**23-26.** *But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

Death is an enemy, but it is the last one; and it is an enemy that shall be destroyed; but it shall be destroyed last.

**27, 28.** *For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

There will, one day, be an end of the Mediatorial system. Christ shall have restored us to the Father, and then he, as our Head, and we, as making up the family of the redeemed, shall rejoice in the God who is “all in all.”

**29-32.** *Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.*

If there is no resurrection, the philosophy of the Epicureans is a true one. If we are to come an end when we die, let us enjoy life while we can, if it is to be a short life, let it be a merry one. You see

to what a conclusion this theory would lead us, so let us stand back from it with horror. The logical consequence convicts the statement as falsehood. There is a future state, and there is to be a resurrection of the body.

**33-35.** *Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame. But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?*

You know the almost endless questions that may be asked about this matter, and you know the snares into which a man may fall if he begins curiously to pry into this mystery. Paul will have no prying into the mystery, and somewhat tartly he answers: —

**36.** *Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.*

Would you take the seed into your hand, and begin to argue, “How can that little seed ever become a flower?” Could you guess, apart from observation, what kind of flower would grow out of such a seed as that? You would make a hundred foolish guesses if you tried it. So is it concerning the resurrection of the body; in due time we shall know, and we shall see; but till then, we must wait and trust.

**37, 38.** *And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.*

Every man shall have his own body. There will be differences and peculiarities, even as there are here; and we shall therefore know each other.

**39-42.** *All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption;*

You know all about that.

**42.** *It is raised in incorruption:*

What an anticipation for us!

**43.** *It is sown in dishonour;*

For, with all the honour that we can pay to our departed dear ones, it is a dishonour to them to have to lie encased in a coffin, in the cold clay of the cemetery.

**43.** *It is raised in glory:*

Oh, the splendor of that resurrection!

**43.** *It is sown in weakness;*

It is so weak that it cannot get into its own last resting-place, but must be tenderly laid there by others.

**43, 44.** *It is raised in power: it is sown a natural body;*

A soulish body, a body fitted for the human soul.

**44.** *It is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

A body fitted for the new-born spirit which is given in regeneration.

**45-48.** *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy:*

You and I have every evidence about us that we are earthy.

**48.** *And as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*

Glory be to the name of Christ we belong to him, and already the heavenly light begins to shine upon us, and we are getting ready soon to put on the garments of immortality.

**49-51.** *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep,*

For some will be here when Christ comes again to this earth.

**51-58.** *But we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead*

*shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren,*

“Let us weep and lament”? Oh, no! That is not the apostle’s inference. Therefore, let us throw down our weapons, and say, “It is no good to continue the fight, for we must all die”? Far from it.

**58.** *Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

“Ye know,” because Christ has risen, and because you also shall rise and because there is a reward of grace laid up in store for you. The Lord’s people may die, but the Lord’s church never dies, and the Lord himself, the ever-living One, is always with us, blessed be his holy name!

## **1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-9**

**1.** *Moreover, brethren I declare unto you the gospel —*

Mark that Paul writes concerning “the gospel.” We shall see now what “the gospel” is.

**1-3.** *Which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

That is the central truth of the gospel.

**4.** *And that he was buried,*

That is an essential part of the gospel.

**4.** *And that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

This is the bright light of the gospel, the resurrection of our Lord from the dead —

**5-9.** *And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

Yet he was made one amongst the many testifiers to the fact that Jesus really died, and was buried, and rose from the dead, of which we will speak more particularly by-and-by.

This exposition consisted of readings from MARK 15:34-47; JOHN 19:38-42; AND 1 CORINTHIAN 15:1-9

### **1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-20**

**1, 2.** *Moreover, Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

Paul preached the gospel, his hearers received it, and also stood in it: "wherein ye stand." It is essential to salvation to hear the gospel, to receive it, and then to stand in it. Now, what was this gospel? Paul is going to tell us; and instead of making a list of doctrines, he mentions a set of facts.

**3.** *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received,*

Notice that the preacher does not make the gospel. If he makes it, it is not worth your having. Originality in preaching, if it be originality in the statement of doctrine, is falsehood. We are not makers and inventors; we are repeaters, we tell the message we have received.

**3.** *How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

This then, is the gospel, that Jesus "died for our sins", taking our sins upon himself. He bore the death penalty for us, "according to the scriptures." There are plenty of scriptures, Old Testament scriptures, which teach this great truth by way of prophecy.

**4.** *And that he was buried,*

This was necessary as a proof of his death, and as the ground work of his rising again.

**4.** *And that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

This is the gospel, Christ dead, buried, risen again, ever living. We must dwell upon these points, for they are the essentials of the gospel.

**5, 6.** *And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present,*

When Paul wrote,-

**6, 7.** *But some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.*

In different places, and at different hours; sometimes by one, sometimes by eleven, once by five hundred brethren at once, Jesus was seen after he had risen from the dead. As I have often said, there is no historical fact that is so well authenticated as that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

**8.** *And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

Paul calls himself an abortion, and speaks of himself as one hardly worth mentioning; yet he had seen the Lord after his resurrection from the dead. He was not a man to be deceived, for he had persecuted the Church of Christ. He was exceedingly mad against the Messiah; so that if he said that he had seen Jesus of Nazareth, and that he was converted by the sight, we may be quite sure that it was so. Paul was not a man to undergo all the sacrifices he had to endure, for the sake of a mere dream.

**9, 10.** *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

No man could be more thoroughly with Christ, heart and soul, than that Paul who, aforesaid, had been the blood thirsty Saul of Tarsus. His witness may well be believed; and, in connection with all that went before it, it proves beyond all doubt that he who was crucified and was laid in the tomb, did certainly rise again, and was seen in life after death.

**11.** *Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.*

There was not a doubt about that. All the apostles, all the early Christians preached the resurrection of Christ; and the Corinthians, when they became Christians, believed it.

**12.** *Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

What! had they got so far as that, to call themselves Christians, and yet they doubted the truth of the resurrection of the dead? Yes, they spirited it away, they made it into a kind of myth or fable; and yet they called themselves Christians. That the heathen should not believe it, was not wonderful; but that those who professed to believe that Christ had risen from the dead, yet doubted the resurrection of his people, was indeed a strange thing. Paul argues with them about this matter.

**13, 14.** *But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*

If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, we are preaching a falsehood. If he did not rise from the dead, you are believing a falsehood, and our preaching and your believing are nothing but vanity.

**15-17.** *Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*

If Jesus Christ is not risen, he has done nothing for you; you are not saved, you are not pardoned, you are not renewed. It is all a myth, all a piece of deceit. If that fact be given up, that Christ rose from the dead, everything connected with salvation is also given up.

**18.** *Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.*

All the godly saints died resting in the risen Christ; and if he is not risen, they died under a delusion, and they have perished.

**19.** *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

Those who are believers in Christ, says Paul, are miserable dupes if he has not risen from the dead. They are believing and resting all their hopes upon a lie. It makes them happy, truly; but if you can take away from them that hope, by persuading them that what it is grounded upon is not true, you have made them miserable indeed.

**20.** *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

Paul has been arguing on every supposition, and now he comes back with his own positive witness a Christ is risen. You remember that Jesus died at the time of the Passover, as the one great Paschal Lamb; but he rose again on the first day of the week, and that was the feast of firstfruits with the Jews. They brought handfuls of wheat from the fields to show their gratitude to God, and in order that a blessing might rest on all the crop; and Paul uses Christ's rising on that particular day as a figure: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." He lives. He is the firstfruits, and the full harvest will follow. All who are in him will rise from the dead; for he is one with them, and none can separate them from him, nor sever him from them. They died in him, and they live because he liveth, blessed be his name

### **1 CORINTHIANS 15. 1-28, 50-58**

**1, 2.** *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

What then was this gospel which Paul had preached, and which the Christians in Corinth had received,—the gospel which Paul declared would save them if they truly believed it? Was it a gospel made up merely of doctrines? No; it was a gospel formed of facts.

**3.** *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

That is the first fundamental fact in the gospel system. Blessed is the man who believes it, and rests his soul upon it.

**4.** *And that he was buried: and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

That grand fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead is rightly put next to his substitutionary sacrifice, for it is the very cornerstone of our holy faith. It is one of the essential doctrines which must be received by us, for we cannot truly believe the gospel unless we accept the great truth of Christ's resurrection.

**5-8.** *And that he was seen of Cephas,— that is, Peter,— then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James, then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

I suppose, brethren, that we may have persons arise, who will doubt whether there was ever such a man as Julius Caesar, or Napoleon Bonaparte; and when they do,—when all reliable history is flung to the winds,—then, but not till then, may they begin to question whether Jesus Christ rose from the dead, for this historical fact is attested by more witnesses than almost any other fact that stands on record in history, whether sacred or profane. The risen Christ was seen by many persons who knew him intimately before he died, by those who saw him put to death, and who saw him when he was dead. He was seen, on various occasions, privately, by one, by two, by twelve, of those who had been his companions for years; at other times, he was seen, in public, by large numbers who could not all have been deceived. These men were so certain that this was indeed the same Christ who had lived, and died, that, although it was at first difficult to make them believe that he had risen from the dead, it was impossible to make them doubt it afterwards, and the major part of them died to bear witness to the fact, they were martyred because they confessed that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. There is no fact in history, from the days of Adam until now, that is better attested than this great central truth of the resurrection of Christ; so we accept it, and receive it gladly. Paul finishes up his list of witnesses by putting himself down as one of them, although his conversion was, to himself, such a marvellous display of divine grace that he was like “one born out of due time.”

**9-14.** *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was*

*bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I; but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, the your faith is also vain.*

It is all emptiness together. Our preaching evaporates—there is nothing left in it—unless Christ did really rise from the dead; and your faith has nothing in it either, you are believing in that which is only vanity, and nothingness unless his resurrection was a fact.

**15-17.** *Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom, he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*

So that you cannot be a Christian if you deny the resurrection of Christ.

You must give up Christianity altogether, and confess that your faith in it was a delusion, unless you believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and that therefore there is a resurrection from the dead for the sons of men. Let it ever be most clearly understood that what Christ is, that his people are. There is an unbroken union between the Head and the members, so that, if he lives, they live; and if he lives not, then they live not; and if they live not, then he lives not. Jesus and those for whom he died are so intimately joined together that they are really and truly one, and nothing can ever separate them.

**18, 19.** *Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

That is to say, if our hope for the future be all a lie, we have been dreadfully deceived; and, moreover, if we could lose a hope so brilliant as that has been to us, there would fall upon us a sense of loss so great that no one in the world could be so wretched as we should be. Besides, the apostles being always in jeopardy of their lives, if they were suffering poverty, and persecution, and the fear of

death by martyrdom, all for a lie, they were indeed of all men the most deluded, and the most miserable. But the Corinthians would not admit that, neither will we.

**20.** *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits*

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He must always come first, that in all things he may have the preeminence.

**20-28.** *Of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule the all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

The mediatorial person of Christ, as God-man, shall bow before the eternal majesty of the Godhead: "that God may be all in all." Now we will finish our reading with just a few verses at the close of the chapter.

**50, 51.** *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

We shall not all die, some will be alive when Christ comes to this earth again; "but we shall all be changed," if not by the process of death and resurrection, yet by some other means.

**52.** *In, a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall he raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

Somehow or other, such a change as this must take place before we can enter heaven, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

**53-58.** *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on in corruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that ,is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

That should be the practical outcome of receiving the great truths of which we have been reading God grant that it may be! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from REVELATION 7. 9-17; 1 CORINTHIANS 15. 1-28, 50-58.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-32**

**1, 2.** *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

By which the apostle means, unless they had a false faith, a merely notional faith; or he may also mean “Unless what I have preached unto you should have been a fable, and therefore you will have exercised your faith upon nothing real, and so it would have been in vain.”

**3.** *For I delivered unto you first of all that which, I also received,-*

The preacher of Christ must not make new doctrines. He is not to be his own teacher, he is to receive the truth first, and then to deliver it. The Christian minister takes the lamp out of the hand of God, and then passes it on to the hands of his people. Think not that any originality is needed in the pulpit. All that is required is that the herald should faithfully deliver his Master’s message just as his Master gives it to him. “I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received,-“

**3, 4.** *How that Christ died for our sins according to the scripture; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

There are many passages in the Old Testament which describe the Messiah as dying for sinners, especially the old chapter of Isaiah's prophecy. There are others that speak of him as being buried, yet not corrupting in the tomb. These were facts which the apostle had received upon the testimony of others; now comes the great fact of the resurrection:-

**5-8.** *And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostle. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

The apostle does not attempt to defend the doctrine of the resurrection by an argument fetched from reason, but he proves it by undoubted evidence. If I had to prove that there existed such a tree as the cedar, I should not use logical arguments further than this,-I produce a certain number of men who have seen a cedar, and the thing is proved by their testimony. If the evidence of honest men be not accepted, then there is an end, not only to Christianity, but to all the sciences, and you and I must wander forever in a maze of doubts. Now, of all the facts recorded in history, there is not one which is better attested than the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The men who testified that they had seen the risen Christ evidently had no selfish reason for doing so. What is the result of their testimony? They were cast into prison, they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, simply for believing the evidence of their own senses, and testifying what they knew to be true. It is clear that they would have had no interest in publishing this fact if it had not been true; their interest would have lain quite the other way. Besides, it was not as if only a few had seen him but over five hundred brethren at once beheld him. For forty days he was gazed upon by different persons, and the fact is proved beyond all doubt.

**9.** *For I am the least of the apostles that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

“God has forgiven me,” said a good man once, “but I shall never forgive myself.” So was it with the apostle Paul; he knew that God

had forgiven him, and honoured him by making him an apostle, but he could not forgive himself; and no doubt the tears gushed from his eyes when he wrote these words, "I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

**10.** *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, out I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me*

In what humble tones Paul speaks! He will not deny what grace has done in him and by him, but he will ascribe it all to grace. Brethren, you are not to shut your eyes to the gracious change which God's Holy Spirit has wrought in you. You may speak of it, and speak of it often, but always guard against taking any of the honour to yourselves, and be especially careful to put the crown upon the right head.

**11, 12.** *Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

For Christ was the pattern man to all his people. He is their Representative. Whatever he did, he did for them; and whatever was wrought in him shall be surely wrought in them, and if Christ rose from the dead, then all who are members of his mystical body must rise too; for when the Head comes out of the grave, you cannot retain the members in it. Prove that Christ rose, and you prove that his people rise, for they are one with him.

**13.** *But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:*

Yet it is proved by hundreds of credible witnesses that Christ is risen, therefore there is a resurrection.

**14.** *And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*

This truth is the key-stone of the arch, put this away, and the whole tumbles down. It is upon this that the whole Christian system rests. If the resurrection of Christ be a mere myth, and not a positive matter of fact, preaching and faith are equally vain.

**15.** *Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.*

The apostle puts the matter strongly, yet not too strongly. He seems to say, "You know me to be an honest and truthful man, having no selfish motive in what I declare unto you; but if Christ did not rise from the dead, I have testified to you a gross falsehood, and led you to put your trust in an imposture." So he stakes his own personal character upon the fact of Christ resurrection.

**16, 17.** *For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*

Yet they knew that they were not in their sins, for they had the witness within them that their sins had been pardoned. They knew that sin had no more dominion over them, for they had been made to walk in holiness before the Lord. "Therefore," says Paul, "Christ must have risen, for if he had not risen, you would have remained sinners as you once were."

**18.** *Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.*

A supposition against which both nature and grace revolt.

**19, 20.** *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

As they always brought into the Jewish tabernacle and temple a portion of the harvest, which indicated that the harvest was begun, so Christ's going up to heaven was the taking of the first sheaf into God's great garner, and all the rest must follow.

**21, 22.** *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even in Christ shall all be made alive.*

Not that all shall be saved, but all will be raised from the dead. Or else the passage means that, as all who were in the first Adam died as the result of Adam's sin, so all who are in the second Adam, that is, Christ, shall live as the result of his righteousness. The question is, Are we in the second Adam? Faith is that which unites us to Christ. If we are trusting in him by a living faith, then his rising from the dead ensures our rising from the dead; and if not, it

be true that we shall rise, but it will be to shame and everlasting contempt.

**23-28.** *But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is accepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

This is a very difficult passage, but I suppose the meaning is just this. Jesus Christ, in order to remedy the great mischief of sin, was appointed to a mediatorial kingdom over all worlds, and that kingdom will continue until all his enemies shall be destroyed, and sin shall be trodden under his feet. Then Christ-as mediator, mark you, not as Lord, shall deliver up his mediatorial kingdom to his Father, and there shall be heard that great shout, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" Christ as God, as one of the persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, will still be as glorious as ever, but his mediatorial reign will then be over, seeing that he hath accomplished all its purposes.

**29.** *Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?*

This is another most difficult passage, and many meanings have been given to it, but I think the most likely to be correct is this: As soon as a member of the early Christian Church was given up to the lion or to be burned, another convert would step forward, and say, "Let me take his name and place." Though it was almost certain that they also would soon be put to death, there were always found persons bold enough to come forward to be baptized, to take the place of the dead. "Now," says the apostle, "what advantage is there in this horizon if the dead rise not?"

**30.** *And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?*

Why were the apostles always subjecting themselves to cruel persecution?

**31.** *I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.*

He was so hunted about everywhere that there was not a day in whole he felt secure of his life, so he asks, “Why should I endure this if there be no world to come?”

**32.** *If after the manner of men I has fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?*

It is quite possible that Paul was thrown to the lions in the theatre at Ephesus, and that he fought with them, and came off a conqueror. “But why,” says he, “did I try to save my life for future labour and for future suffering if the dead rise not?”

**32.** *Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.*

This is the best philosophy in the world if there is no life to come. So Paul has proved his point right well by every argument that he has used.

# 2 CORINTHIANS

## 2 CORINTHIANS 1 AND 2:1

*1.1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:*

Paul is very jealous of his apostleship. There were some in Corinth who denied it, and therefore he takes care, at the very commencement of this Epistle,—as he does in beginning most of his letters,—to write concerning himself, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.” But with what humility of mind does he associate Timothy with himself! Frequently he puts Timothy, his own convert, one so young, and so much beneath him in position and attainments, on a level with himself; and if we also can help our younger brethren, how willingly should we put our—selves side by side with them!

*2. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

What a wonderful source of grace and peace! “God our Father.” How can he give other than grace and peace to his own children? “And from the Lord Jesus Christ,” our redeeming Saviour, who has given himself for us, and who has graven our names on the palms of his hands;—is there not an abundant supply of grace and peace to be found in the very music of his name?

*3. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;*

Let me read those titles again: “The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.” Do not the second and third titles derive much of their significance from the first one? It is because God is “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” that he becomes “the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.”

*4. Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

Experience teaches the first rank of God's servants, and their experience of sorrow and consolation is often the means of enabling them to be the means of blessing to others. Almost everything that the minister of the gospel enjoys or endures will be found to be sent to him for the elect's sake, that he may know how to teach them the lessons he has himself learned.

*5. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.*

Are we not willing to endure the greater suffering that we may enjoy the greater consolation?

*6. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.*

We receive both suffering and consolation for the sake of others, and we are bound to give out again all that we receive. It is the essence of the true Christian life first to be dependent upon God for everything, and then to give forth to all around us that which God has poured into our spirit. The heart would soon die if it pumped in the blood, and never pumped it out again; but it is by that perpetual process of giving out what it has received that it continues in life; and the highest form of Christian life is the reception of all that comes to us out of the fullness of Christ, and then the free giving out of what he has bestowed.

*7-10. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;*

No doubt Paul did preach all the better and with the greater confidence in God because he preached, like Richard Baxter, "as a dying man to dying men." His life was frequently in danger, and on this occasion it was so in a very remarkable degree; so, when he was again able to testify for his master, he realized that he had no time to waste, and therefore he wrote and spoke with the utmost

earnestness. He felt himself in jeopardy every hour, and therefore he fell back upon his God, and trusted alone in him. Anything that works to this end for us also is an undisguised blessing.

**11.** *Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.*

Much prayer leads to much thanksgiving. It should be a great cause for joy when numbers of Christians unite in praying for any Christian minister, for they will unite also in praising God on his behalf, when that which they asked for him is granted.

**12.** *For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.*

There had been whispers, among these Corinthians, that Paul had concealed a double meaning in some of his writings, and also that he had made a promise which he never intended to keep; so now he calls upon them to bear witness that he never was a man to act according to policy, but he was a straightforward, honest, plain-dealing man, full of godly sincerity and unselfishness. He had abundantly proved all this to the Corinthians, for, lest they should have any occasion for speaking against him, he would not take at their hands the support to which he was entitled, but he laboured at his trade of tent-making that they might not have anything to say concerning him except that he was disinterested in all his endeavors to serve them. Paul evidently felt their unkindness very much, but his conscience assured him that their accusations were unjust.

**13, 14.** *For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; as also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

See how Paul restrains himself in wilting to these people, he had good cause to be offended, for they had touched him in a point about which he was very jealous, namely, his integrity; but here he speaks with great moderation of spirit, and herein lay his strength. Every Christian man, when he has to defend himself against false accusations, should use soft words and hard arguments.

**15, 16.** *And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; and to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea.*

He had planned to see them in his going, and also in his returning; but he could not carry out the idea which was in his mind. The wisest of men often find their plans impracticable, and even an inspired man is not always inspired. God guides him when guidance is absolutely necessary; but, at other times, he leaves him to arrange according to his own judgment; and to find out that his judgment is not infallible. "I had a mind," says he, "to come and see you twice."

**17.** *When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness?*

"Did I make up my mind hastily, and then did I change it all of a sudden without good reason? Had I never thought before I decided, and therefore did I find it necessary to revoke my promise?"

**17, 18.** *Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.*

He binds up his own ministry with himself, and he says, "You charge me with being fickle, but you know better; you are well aware that I am not one who says one thing today and another thing tomorrow. You know that I have been open and aboveboard in all my dealings with you, and that I have never stooped to policy and craftiness, but have spoken that which I believed, whatever might come of it."

**19.** *For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.*

He declares that he preached the truth straightforwardly and consistently, and that he did not say one thing one day and another thing a few days later.

**20.** *For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*

Christ is no quicksand, slipping and sliding away, and so ruining those who cling to him. He is the Rock of ages, and he stands fast for ever. His gospel is one and the same at all times. You see that, as Paul grows warm, he advances in his argument. If the Corinthians

suspected his honesty in making a promise, the next thing they would do would be to suspect the gospel, and after that they would suspect Christ himself, who is the truth.

**21-23.** *Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.*

“If I had come, I should have been obliged to rebuke you and reprove you. I should have had to be like an armed man going to battle, or an officer of the law carrying out the sentence pronounced upon a criminal, and I could not bear to do that; so I felt it would be better and wiser to stay away, and therefore I did not visit you as I had proposed.”

**24.** *Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.*

(See Chapter 2.)

**2 CORINTHIANS 2:1.** *But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.*

And they ought to have had enough confidence in him to know that he had a very good and sufficient reason for not fulfilling his conditional promise. Let us, dear friends, who, are one in Christ, trust each other; for, if suspicion be, once bred among the people of God, it will mean farewell to all fellowship.

## **2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-20**

**1.** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,—*

Paul is very careful to remind the Corinthians of that fact, since some of them had gone the length of denying his apostleship altogether.

**1.** *And Timothy our brother,—*

Whom, in all humility, he associates with himself, although he was a younger man, of far less consequence; but Paul loved him very much, and therefore he put his name at the beginning of this Epistle side by side with his own: “and Timothy our brother,”

**1, 2.** *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Christianity is a religion of benedictions. Whereas worldly people often use the language of courtesy towards one another without meaning what they say, the saints of God put a fullness of meaning into their expressions, and really wish every good thing to those to whom they write. "Grace be to you." That comes first, and then peace follows. Peace without grace is a very dangerous possession; but a peace that grows out of the possession of grace is a gracious peace, and will lead to the peace of glory ere long. This grace and peace are to come "from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." There is no grace for us apart from the Lord Jesus Christ; and though the Father is full of love, and will give grace and peace to his people, yet the Lord Jesus Christ must always be the channel through which these incomparable favors must flow to them.

**3, 4.** *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

Nothing less, then, shall be given to the tried people of God than that same comfort which was enjoyed by the apostle Paul; it shall be shared by all who are resting where Paul rested.

**5.** *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.*

The apostles were the most tried, but they were the most comforted. They had to stand the brunt of the battle, but the Lord was their strength in a very special sense. Observe the balance in this verse: "as the sufferings," "so our consolation;" and "as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." With little trial, we may expect little comfort. It is better to leave the whole matter entirely with God, or else we might almost desire to be digged about by the spade of affliction, that we might receive more of the living waters of consolation.

**6.** *And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings*

*which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.*

That, is the grand object of Christians, to live for others. When God has helped us to receive both our comforts and our sorrows as matters of trust that we are to take care of for the benefit of our fellow-Christians, then have we learned the lesson which Christ would teach us by them.

*7. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.*

How these things are put together! God does not call his people to the one without the other,— no consolation without affliction; and, blessed be his name, no affliction without consolation!

*8. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:*

Why would Paul have them know this but that they might understand that he had to suffer as they did, and even more. Sometimes, God's people are apt to think that their ministers are not cast down as they themselves are. They look upon them as a sort of superior order of beings who have no doubts and fears, no want of strength, no despair; but that is an idle fiction, and the sooner it is gone from our minds, the better; for those who lead the people of God will rather have more afflictions than less. Seeing that they need more instruction than others need, and that instruction usually comes with the rod, in all probability they will have more of the rod than others will. Paul, therefore, is anxious that the Corinthians should know in what seas of trouble he had to swim.

*9, 10. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we: should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;*

It is supposed by some that the apostle was in danger of being put to death in some extraordinary way,— perhaps by wild beasts in the amphitheatre. We know that he speaks of having fought with beasts at Ephesus; we cannot tell whether there is here any allusion to that trial, or what it was; but it was evidently some death which, to the apostle, seemed to be exceedingly terrible; and when he was delivered from it, it was like a resurrection. He speaks of it as

having been wrought by God that raiseth the dead; and he puts down this deliverance, together with some other of which he was at that very time the subject,— “and doth deliver,” — and upon these experiences he builds his expectation that God “will yet deliver.”

**11.** *Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.*

When many pray, after the blessings is received, many will give thanks. Paul rejoices to have been the object of interest to a large number of Christians everywhere in the time of his great peril; and when he escaped, he believed he would still be the object of their interest, and that there would be more prayer in the world, and more praise, too, because of the dangers from which God had delivered him. It is worth while for any of us to be in sore sickness, or in great straits, if thereby the quantity of prayer and praise in the world shall be increased to God’s glory.

**12.** *For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.*

For to them he had been specially particular, that in no point they should speak of him as having used the wisdom of words. Among them, he determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified; to them, he was like the nurse who administers milk to babes.

**13, 14.** *For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; as also ye have acknowledged us in part,—*

Some of them disputed his apostleship; but most of them did not,—

**14.** *That, we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

What a happy condition of things it is when the teacher and the taught mutually rejoice in each other; when the teacher is the joy of the flock, and when he can rejoice in his people! This is profitable to all; but when there are discards, and fault-findings, and the like, this is neither glorifying to God nor profitable to the people.

**15-17.** *And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; and to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea. When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay?*

There were some in the church at Corinth who said, "He promised to come and see us, but he did not keep his word." They declared that his promise could not be depended upon, and that he very easily changed his mind. Now, the apostle had done nothing of the kind; he had solid reasons for his change of purpose, and reasons full of love to them; but they misrepresented him. Do not, my dear friends, count the fiery trial of misrepresentation to be any strange thing. Even some of those whom you have loved, and for who' you have been willing to lay down your lives, will turn against you; it is no new thing that they should do so. They may catch up anything which you have done in the simplicity of your heart, and turn it against you. Whenever they do so, I say again, do not think that any strange thing has happened unto you; it happened to Paul, then why should not you have a similar experience?

**18-20.** *But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*

Paul loved to turn from some lower subject to his Lord. When he wrote the words, "yea and nay," they suggested to him the perfect constancy of the love of Christ, and thankfulness for his faithful promises; so, as the thought came into his mind, he could do no other than put it into the Epistle he was writing, for he never missed an opportunity of praising the Lord Jesus Christ. I wish we could all imitate him, in this respect, far more than we have ever done; for, our Saviour is worthy of all the praise we can ever give him, and more, too.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 4

1. *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;*

It is a very high privilege to be called to the work of the Christian ministry, and when the minister remembers what great mercy he has himself received, what sins have been forgiven, what favors have been bestowed, he has the very best incentives in all the world to pursue his ministry with diligence and with zeal. "We faint not," says the apostle. We do not hang our harps upon the willows. We do not pray to be allowed to retire from the battle, and give up the strife; but, feeling how great has been the mercy of God to our own souls, we are stirred up to press forward with holy zeal to win the victory. We long that others may taste of the same good things on which we have feasted.

2. *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

There have, alas! been many preachers who have handled the Word of God in the manner described by the apostle. They have out and trimmed the truth in order to please their generation; they have kept back this, or have made unduly prominent that, instead of giving all the truth of God its proper and proportionate prominence in their ministry; but such men have not, after all, won the respect of their hearers. There is an old story told of King John of England that, when he was closely pressed by the barons, he wrote to the Emperor of Morocco, and offered to turn Mohammedan, and take an oath of allegiance to him if he would send an army to help him, and it is said that, ever after, the Emperor of Morocco abhorred and detested the very name of John, for he said he must be an abominable miscreant to be willing to change his religion for the sake of gain. Ah, my brethren! we never gain any respect, even from the world, by seeking after it in this fashion. Be thoroughly honest, especially you who are in the Christian ministry; be outspoken, blunt, and plain; and then, even if men's prejudices condemn you, their consciences will commend you for speaking what you believe to be the truth.

**3, 4.** *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Without light from above, no man can perceive the beauties either of the gospel or of Christ himself. Until God the Holy Spirit sheds a spiritual light upon the person, and offices, and work of Christ, men grope in the dark as blind men do. They see not the truth, they are not persuaded of its excellence; our ministry is to them a veiled ministry, they do not comprehend it. Let those who receive not the gospel see what a miserable state theirs is, they are blinded by “the god of this world.” He has such supremacy over their intellects that he has utterly perverted and ruined them.

**5.** *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.*

Hence we learn that anything like priestcraft is altogether foreign to the Bible. The “priest” preaches up himself, the extraordinary value of his ordination, the occult influences which flow from his touch, the mysterious power which dwells in baptismal water, and in “consecrated” wafers and poured-out wine. This is preaching themselves with a vengeance; but Christ’s apostles preached not themselves, they preached up Christ and him crucified. Paul wrote, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;” and this was the constant theme of all the apostles. If they mentioned themselves at all, they simply said, as Paul does here, “Ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

**6.** *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

There is the very glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, for he is “very God of very God,” and he who will but think of the wondrous mystery of the Incarnate Deity, and the simple but marvellous plan of salvation through Christ’s atoning sacrifice, will see infinitely more glory there than in all God’s works in creation or providence. Well does Watts say,-

“The spacious earth and spreading flood Proclaim the wise and  
powerful God,  
And thy rich glories from afar Sparkle in every rolling star.”

“But in Christ’s looks a glory stands,  
The noblest labour of thine hands,  
The pleasing lustre of his eyes Outshines the wonders of the  
skies.”

*7. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

The original might very fairly be rendered, “We have this treasure in oyster shells,” for, just as pearls are found in the shells of oysters, so God gives to those who preach the Word the treasure of the gospel, yet they are themselves nothing but the oyster shells, nothing but the earthen vessel in which God pleases to place his priceless treasures. If you have done anything in the service of God, my brother, remember that you are nothing but the oyster shell, it is God’s truth that is the pearl in you; so while you are thankful for the honour that he puts upon you, mind that you give him all the glory. It is well to take the right view of our own imperfections and infirmities, as Paul did when he wrote, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” The infirmity of the creature leaves the more room for the display of the greatness of the Creator; for, if God can work such wondrous results by using such poor tools as we are, how great must be his power and skill!

*8, 9. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; We are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;*

“We are troubled on every side.” There seems to be an allusion here to the Greek wrestling games. Sometimes, in wrestling, a man would be gripped by his adversary so that he could scarcely move hand or foot; yet bravely says the apostle, “We are not distressed,” or, as the original seems to suggest, “We still have a plan of overcoming our adversaries; though they seem to have got us entirely in their power, there is still something that we can do to obtain our release.” And he goes even further than that, for he says, “We are perplexed,” — it seemed as if there was nothing that he could do, yet he added, “but not in despair,” — “not altogether without help,” as the marginal reading renders it, for when he could do nothing, God could do everything. The death of creature-strength is the birth of omnipotent might. “Persecuted, but not forsaken; “-

having no man's face to smile upon him, but still rejoicing in the light of God's countenance. "Cast down," — as if his antagonist had thrown him, and he had fallen heavily upon the ground; yet he says, as he springs up again, "Cast down, but not destroyed." Many a time the Christian wrestler is thrown by his foe, but he never has a final fall. As Paul, when he was stoned at Lystra, and left for dead, rose up again, and soon went on with his work, so the Christian, when he has been cast down by trouble, often seems to gain new life and vigor, and to go on to serve his Master even better than he did before.

**10.** *Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*

The apostles were always ready to die for Christ, and therefore they were enabled to live so much like Christ, imitating his life, and being prepared to follow him even to the death whenever he called them to do so.

**11-14.** *For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.*

There is no possibility of serving God well, especially under great trials and persecutions, without a deeply-rooted confidence in the truth of his gospel. Once have a doubt concerning that, and the strong sinews of our spiritual manhood are out. Once begin to question the evidences of our holy religion, and you cannot henceforth serve God as you did before. Oh, to be strengthened every day with might in the inner man; to feel that in our own experience, we have continually fresh proofs of the truth of the gospel, and that, whether we have trials or delights, we are thereby the more firmly rooted in faith, even as the trees are rooted both by the March winds and the April showers;-and so rooted in faith that we grow into it, and cannot be separated from it, because it has become a part of ourselves. Religion is nothing to any of you unless it is woven into the very warp and woof of your being; it must go

right into your very soul, and become a vital part of you, or else you have never received it in truth.

**15, 16.** *For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

The sickness that crumbles away the body of a Christian often confirms his soul in the faith that he received when he was strong and well. Some of the healthiest hours that God's people ever have are the hours of their sorest sicknesses. God often sends his people fevers to make them well; he sends them losses to make them rich, he takes away their earthly friends to bring them closer to their best Friend, and he brings them to their wits' end that they may begin to be truly wise. Often, when God strips us of all our worldly possessions, it is the most soul-enriching season we have ever known; but, on the other hand, the day of temporal prosperity has often been a day of spiritual poverty. Adversity has many a time been an angel in disguise, but prosperity has been the devil in a mask. Let us take care that we cleave closely to Christ under both experiences, for then both of them shall be sanctified to us.

**17.** *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

Notice the antithesis here. "Light affliction" — a "weight of glory." "Affliction" is not set in contrast with peace, or freedom from affliction, but with "glory." The "light affliction" is "for a moment" — the "weight of glory" is "eternal." And then, as if this were not enough, the apostle has to exhaust all ordinary powers of speech in order adequately to express the contrast between the "light affliction" and the "weight of glory." It is "far more exceeding" — not only a soul brim-full of bliss, and overflowing, but, far more than that if there can be such a thing, — "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" —

**18.** *While we look not at the things which are seen,-*  
Alas for us if we did!

**18.** *But at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal;*

Temporal and temporary; see how they melt away one after another!

**18.** *But the things which are not seen are eternal.*

The substance is beyond the river, the shadows are here. God help us to look for the substance, and to claim it as our own, and let none of us try to grasp the shadows which would be worthless if we could ever hold them in our hands!

## **2 CORINTHIANS 4**

**1.** *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;--*

We are sometimes ready to faint, but we cast our fainting spirits into the arms of God, and our strength is again reserved at times, the very importance of an errand first weighs down the spirit of the messenger, yet afterwards it seems to impel him to more than ordinary exertion. So is it here, having been divinely entrusted with this ministry, and being ready to faint under the tremendous responsibility that it involves, we yet are roused to action by the very pressure which seems to deprive us of the power to act, and therefore “we faint not;”--

**2.** *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*

Far be it from the teacher of truth ever to use words in a non-natural sense, or to dissemble or equivocate, saying to the ear what he means not in the sense in which the hearer understands it. Far be it from us to mix with the Word of God anything of our own as vintners mix various kinds of wine, for such is the import of the word that the apostle here uses. Let none of us ever handle the Word of God deceitfully. There is no deceit in it; it is all pure unmixed truth. An honest mind is needed for the understanding of it, and then a truthful tongue for the telling of it to others. If we do preach undiluted, unadulterated truth, we must not expect that the natural heart of man will commend our honesty. We are to commend ourselves to every man’s conscience, not by cutting and trimming the Word so as to make it palatable to our hearers, leaving one truth

out to please this man, and dwelling too long upon another truth so as to please some other hearer, but by bringing out the whole teaching of the Scripture in clear truthfulness that shall command the approval of the conscience even of those who may not accept the truth that we proclaim.

**3.** *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:*

It is not hidden under the flowers of our oratory, not hidden under the darkness of our speech, not hidden through the fog of our philosophies; if it be hidden at all, it is hidden “to them that are lost.” If they had any spiritual perception or apprehension at all, if they were not utterly lost to everything: that is spiritual, they would be able to receive the gospel that we are bidden to preach, and which therefore becomes “our gospel.”

**4, 5.** *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves,--*

What a miserable topic we should have if we did preach ourselves! But we do not set up ourselves as “priests” having authority to administer “sacraments” to a lower order of beings who do not possess sacerdotal sanctity; we do not claim to belong to a ministerial caste; we regard ourselves as simply on an equality with the rest of the Christian brotherhood; and, therefore, “we preach not ourselves,”—

**5, 6.** *But Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,*

We cannot therefore darken the gospel, or cover it up, “for God hath shined in our hearts,”—

**6, 7.** *To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels,*

The most earnest and faithful minister of the gospel must ever remember that humbling truth. He has this precious treasure of the gospel entrusted to his charge; he knows he has it, and he means to keep it safely, but, still, he is nothing but an earthen vessel, easily broken, soon marred,—a poor depository for such priceless truth. Yet God has a good reason for putting this treasure into earthen vessels,

*7. That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

If angels had been commissioned to preach the gospel, we might have attributed some of its power to their superior intelligence, and if only those had been called to preach the gospel who were men of great intellect and of profound learning, we might have considered that the talent of man was the essential qualification for a preacher. But when God selects, as he often does, nay, as he always does; earthen vessels, and some that seem more manifestly earthen than others, then the excellency of the power is unquestionably seen to be of God, and not of us. In Paul's case, the earthiness of the vessel appeared in the trouble which he had to bear.

*8. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed;-*

He is not so far gone as that. He sees the stormy billows raging around outside the ship everywhere, and the ship is tossed hither and thither upon the waves yet she does not leak, there is no water in the hold, and the waves will not sink the ship as long as she can keep them outside; and trouble will not distress us as long as we can obey our Lord's injunction, "Let not your heart be troubled." "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed;"-

*8. We are perplexed, but not in despair;-*

We scarcely know what to do, but we have not given way to despair. We are perplexed, but hope has not gone from us. *Dum spiro spero*, was the old Latin proverb,—"While I live I hope;" but the Christian proverb is a still better one, *Dum expiro spero*,—"Even while I die I still have hope," for "the righteous hath hope in his death."

*9. Persecuted, but not forsaken;*

For there is One who, when we are persecuted, is persecuted with us, and persecuted in us, who has promised that we shall not be left desolate. He hath said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

"Should persecution rage and flame,

Still truth in thy Redeemer's name;

In fiery trials thou shalt see That, 'as thy day, thy strength shall  
be,'"

*9. Cast down, but not destroyed;--*

Even if the adversary is able to cast us down, he is not able to destroy us, for “underneath are the everlasting arms.” “Cast down, but not destroyed;”--

*10. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*

Thus did these apostolic saints in a very high sense die daily, and so must we, when called to suffer for the truth’s sake, bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus.

*11, 12. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.*

The disinterestedness of Christian affection is here seen, in that Paul was willing even to be delivered unto death if only the church in Corinth and other Christians might receive more of the divine life. This is the motive that actuated our blessed Lord himself. He saved others; but, in order to do so, himself he could not save; and he who would be a blessing to others must expect that just in proportion to the good that he is able to impart to them must be the cost to himself.

*13-16. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sake, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish,*

As, in the ease of most of the apostles, he did absolutely and literally perish by martyrdom,

*16. Yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

As our body, through pain and disease, is constantly sinking towards the grave, here is our continual consolation, that our inner man is renewed day by day.

*17. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

This is one of the most remarkable verses in all Scripture; the contrast here drawn is perfect, and the language is in the highest degree pertinent to the subject. When the apostle speaks of

affliction, he contrasts with it glory. The affliction he calls a lightness of affliction, but the glory he calls a weight of glory; and while he describes the affliction as momentary, he rightly says that the glory is eternal; and then, as though he would make the contract still more vivid, he says that this momentary, light affliction “worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” He can scarcely find words big enough to express the contrast between what believers now have to endure and what they shall forever enjoy.

**18.** *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

## **2 CORINTHIANS 4**

**1-2.** *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*

Paul’s description of his own ministry and that of Timothy also should be true of every servant of Jesus Christ. There must be no dishonesty, or craftiness, or deceit about the minister of the Word, and it is by the manifestation of the truth that he must commend himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. He may not win every man’s approval, yet even those who differ from him must perceive his loyalty to his Lord.

**3, 4.** *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

The light of the gospel is so glorious and bright that it is only hidden from those who have been blinded by Satan, “the god of this world.” The only hope for them is to believe in Jesus who can give sight to the spiritually blind as easily as he gave sight to the physically blind when he was here in the flesh.

**5.** *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.*

“Christ Jesus the Lord” is to be the great theme of our preaching; and when it is so, we naturally take our right position with regard to our hearers, as Paul and Timothy did: “and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

**6, 7.** *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

God might have put the priceless treasure of the gospel into the golden vessel of cherubim and seraphim; and he might have sent angels, who would never suffer, who would never err, who would never sin, to preach the Word; but, instead of doing so, he has chosen to send the gospel to men by commonplace beings like themselves. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels,” and this redoundeth much to God’s glory; and, dear friends, the great object of the sending of the gospel into the world is the glory of God. He would manifest his mercy to men that his mercy might be glorified; and therefore he has committed the gospel, not to the trust of perfect men, but to the trust of poor, shallow, earthen vessels like ourselves.

**8, 9.** *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*

The apostle is here speaking for himself and all the members of the apostolic college, and also for all the early saints. They appear to have been very much troubled, and sometimes to have been very much perplexed. I meet with certain brethren, now and then, who have no troubles; they are so supremely wise that they are never perplexed, and so eminently holy that they do not appear to belong to the ordinary democracy of Christianity, but are altogether supernatural beings. Well, I do not belong to their clique, and it does not seem to me that Paul and the apostles and the early Christians did. Those great pioneers of the Church of Christ were men who were troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, cast down; in fact, they were men of like passions with ourselves.

**10, 11.** *Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’*

*sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.*

So you see, brethren, to have an anticipation of death upon one is no hindrance to one's work, but a great help to it; to bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus is a great help towards the manifestation of the life of Christ. When we begin to reckon that we shall live long, we are very apt to live loosely. To live as though tomorrow might be the judgment day, or as though today the King might come in his glory, that is the style of living which is the best of all. "A short life and a holy one," —lengthened as God may please, but reckoned by us as short even at the longest, — be that the Christian's motto. As the worldling says, "A short life and a merry one," we say, "A short life if God so wills it, but a holy one whether it be long or short."

**12.** *So then death worketh in us, but life in you.*

These apostolic men lived as it were on the borders of the grave, — lived expecting to die a cruel death; and in this way spiritual life was brought to the Corinthians and others who witnessed their holy lives and heroic deaths.

**13-16.** *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

As the flesh goes down, so, by God's grace, the spirit goes up. You know that there are heavy weights that keep men down to the earth; but he who understands mechanics knows that by the use of wheels and pulleys those same heavy weights may be made to lift a man; and God often makes the weights and burdens associated with bodily decay lift up the inward spirit.

**17, 18.** *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

## 2 CORINTHIANS 4

**1.** *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;*

Stern was the labour of the apostles, but they felt that their work was so all-important, so divine, that they must not grow weary of it, though they were, doubtless, often weary in it.

**2.** *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

It is no part of the business of Christ's ministers to modify the truth which he has entrusted to them, or to put new meanings into it which God never meant, draining away the very life-blood of the gospel, and leaving it dead and useless; but it is both our duty and our privilege to state it just as we find it, and to proclaim it in as plain language as possible so that everybody may understand what the teaching of God really is.

**3.** *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost;*

It was not hidden under fine language and oratorical flourishes on the part of the apostles; there was a far more terrible barrier in the way of its entrance into the hearts of some who heard it.

**4-7.** *In whom the god of the world hath blinded the mind of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who in the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels,*

There is nothing remarkable in us, we are in ourselves poor, frail fragile creatures, like earthen vessels of no particular value, yet this we do not regret, for there is a good reason for it: —

**7-10.** *That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not*

*destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*

He who wishes for an easy time of it must not become a minister of the gospel. If he is determined to preach it faithfully, fully, simply, straight from his heart, he will often find himself in such circumstances as the apostle describes in these verses.

**11.** *For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.*

The apostles were always to the front where the shots were flying the fastest, and with the deadliest aim; there they stood, the officers of the army of Christ and Paul rejoiced that, for one, he was able thus to make himself to be nothing that Christ might be the great All-in-all.

**12.** *So then death worketh in us but life in you.*

So long as Paul could be the means of the salvation of the souls of men, he did not mind what became of himself, though it should be death to him, he would count it as nothing so long as it should bring life to them.

**13, 14.** *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.*

Note the assurance of apostolic preaching and writing. There is no "if" here, no hesitation, no doubt. The apostles knew what they believed, and knew why they believed it, and they spoke with the accent of conviction; nobody was led into doubt by their hesitancy.

**15, 16.** *For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not;*

Paul had said before that they did not faint, and now he reiterates it that, though his ministry was enough to bear him down, and lay him prostrate in the dust, yet he did not faint.

**16, 18.** *But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of*

*glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 5:1-10; AND 2 CORINTHIANS 4; AND 5.

## **2 CORINTHIANS 5**

**1.** *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Is not this grand courage on the part of the apostle? With all the world against him, and himself “alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake,” he looks at the new body, the new house that God is making for him, and he reckons that, to shuffle off this mortal coil will be no loss to him, since, when he loses the tent in which he lives here, he will go to “a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

**2-4.** *For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, —*

We are not impatient to enter the disembodied state, —

**4-6.** *But clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, —*

Note the ground of the apostle’s confidence. He is quite sure that, inasmuch as Christ rose from the dead, so all his followers must; and though they die in the Lord’s service, yet shall they not be losers thereby, but they shall the more speedily ascend to their reward. “We are always confident,” —

**6-9.** *Knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.*

To be well-pleasing to God everywhere, in everything that we do, should be the one aim of a Christian, whether he is in the body or out of the body.

**10-13.** *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade them; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, —*

And men said that these apostles had gone out of their minds. Festus said to Paul, “thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad;” so Paul says, “Whether we be beside ourselves,” —

**13.** *It is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.*

“In either case, we have but one object, and that is, to glorify God through your salvation.”

**14-15.** *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

The life of the saved man must never be lived for himself; he is false to his profession if it is so. He must henceforth live as earnestly for God as, aforetime in his unregeneracy, he lived for himself, for he now has a new life which is not his own, to do with it as he pleases, but it belongs entirely to him who purchased it with his own most precious blood.

**16.** *Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.*

We do not see Christ with our natural eyes, we do not hear his voice with our natural ears, he is to us now a spiritual Personage, who communicates with our spirits through his own ever-blessed Spirit.

**17.** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.*

There could not be a greater change than that which is wrought by regeneration, it is a new creation, the passing away of the old, and the making of all things new.

**18-21.** *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 5:1-10; AND 2 CORINTHIANS 4; AND 5.

## **2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-9**

**1, 2.** *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, —*

In this poor body it is our lot often to groan, but the groan is a hopeful one, for it is a birth-pang, and it will bring joy in due time: "For in this we groan," —

**2-6.** *Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if it be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, —*

That is a blessed experience, "always confident." There are some Christians who are never confident, and some who are afraid of being confident. I know some who, if they see this holy confidence in other Christians, begin to tremble for their eternal safety. Never mind about them, brother, if God gives you a holy confidence in him, hold fast to it, and do not let it go whatever anyone may say.

**6-9.** *Knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: for we walk by faith, not by sight:;) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.*

That is our main business; whether we live or whether we die is of no consequence at all, but to be accepted of Christ, so to live is to be well pleasing to God. Be this our heavenly ambition, and may the Holy Spirit graciously enable us to attain to it!

This exposition consisted of readings from 2 CORINTHIANS 4 AND 5:1-9.

## **2 CORINTHIANS 5:9-21**

**9-11.** *Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.*

The outside world did not understand the preachers of the gospel; they thought them dreamy enthusiasts, earnest about nothing at all. But Paul says that God understood him, and he hoped, too, that the consciences of those to whom he was writing had also understood him. The truly faithful minister of Jesus Christ may know that there are two approvals that he will be sure to get, — the approval of his Master, and the approval of men's consciences. Their prejudice may condemn him, his mode of oratory may not suit their fancy, but their conscience must give quite a different verdict; it must approve the faithful preaching of the gospel.

**12, 13.** *For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.*

Happy Paul who, as a preacher of the gospel, could write, "If you say that we are beside ourselves, that we are really mad upon religious matters, — well, it is to God that we are so. It is not every madman who can say that. "Or if you tell us that we are too serious

and sober, it is your case, your cause, that makes us so.” Well may we be sober and solemn when we think of the danger in which men’s souls continually are.

**14, 15.** *For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

The true-hearted Christian judges himself to have died when Christ died, and, henceforth, he feels that he must not live for any object but the glory of Christ.

**16.** *Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.*

He is gone back to glory, so our object is not to win a kingdom for him anywhere upon earth. Our aim now is spiritual, the proclamation of his truth, the winning of a kingdom for him in the hearts of men.

**17-19.** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

The work of reconciliation he committed to his Son; the word of reconciliation he has committed to us. It is our high privilege to tell the tidings of the wondrous work by which God is reconciled, so that, without any violation of his justice, he can have mercy upon those who have offended against him.

**20.** *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

As if Christ himself stood here, and pleaded with you, he bids his ministers plead on his behalf. In the name of God, he bids us beseech you to be reconciled to God. Ambassadors do not generally beseech men; they stand on their dignity, they make demands for the

honour of their sovereign; but Christ's ambassadors know of no dignity which should keep them from pleading with men.

**21.** *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

## **2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-18**

**1.** *We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.*

God's servants are called to take many different positions. They are ambassadors under one aspect; they are workers under another. As ambassadors, they are ambassadors for Christ, as workers, they are workers together with God. Oh, how much it costs to win a soul! I mean, not only how much it cost the Saviour, so that he broke his very heart over it, and poured out his life's blood, — but also how much it must cost the messenger of peace! He must know how to beseech and implore; and when even this fails, he must still go on toiling, labouring, as a worker together with God.

**2.** *(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*

I trust that, if I am addressing any who say that it is too late for them to be saved, and that their sin is too great to be forgiven, this text will drive away that unholy and unwarranted fear: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Then the apostle goes on to speak of himself, and the rest of the apostles and other preachers of the Word: —

**3, 4.** *Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God,*

As those early servants of the Lord really did.

**4-10.** *In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown and yet well known, as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed as*

*sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

All these things Paul and his brethren were to be and to do in order to win souls for Christ; just as the hunters in the cold North seek after furs, and try all sorts of plans to catch the wild creatures on which they grow. They will trap them, or snare them, or shoot them; but, somehow or other, they will get them. They will be on the alert all day, and all night, too. They will learn the habits of every creature they have to deal with, but they will get the furs somehow. And so must the true minister of Christ be willing to be anything, to do anything, to suffer anything, to bear reproach and shame, to be nothing, or to be all things to all men, if by any means he may save some.

**11, 12.** *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.*

If they were not saved, it was not because Paul did not open his mouth to speak to them, and to warn and invite them, nor because he did not open his heart, and feel, in his very bowels, the movements of a sacred compassion for them. Now, having thus spent himself in his endeavor to bring them to Christ, he writes to those whom he did bring: —

**13.** *Now for a recompence in the same,*

There must be some wages for this blessed work. The apostle wisely puts it on that footing, as if, surely, they were indebted to him, but the payment that he seeks is, of course, no personal gain to him; he only puts it in that form, but it is a gain to them.

**13.** *(I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.*

“There has been so much earnest labour to secure your conversion, so be ye also in earnest to bring in others. Get large thoughts of God; be fully consecrated to him, spend and be spent for him. Follow a good example.” Paul could well urge them to that consecration when he had given himself so completely to the work of winning souls: “Be ye also enlarged.”

**14.** *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:*

Not in any way, — neither in marriage which is the chief of all forms for yoking, nor yet in business or other partnerships.

**14.** *For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

You must be in the same world with them, but keep yourself distinct from them. Go not into their society by your own choice, nor seek your pleasure with them.

**15-18.** *And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

## **2 CORINTHIANS 8**

Although this is rather a practical than a spiritual chapter, I hope that we shall get profit out of it by the teaching of the Spirit of God who inspired Paul to write it. Paul was writing to the church at Corinth to commend the churches of Macedonia, that he might stir up the one church by the example of the others. The saints at Jerusalem were starving because of a famine, and it came into the mind of certain Gentile churches to send help to the mother-church at Jerusalem. It was regarded as a very wonderful thing that Gentiles should be sending help to Jews. I hope it would not be thought wonderful now, but it was then; and Paul, who loved the saints at Corinth, and saw that they were a little backward in this matter stirred them up to greater diligence. He did not like the churches in Macedonia to go so far ahead of the church in Corinth which was richer, and more endowed with gifts, and therefore he set to work to stimulate their generosity. Thus he begins: —

**1.** *Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;*

That is a quaint old expression, “We do you to wit.” It means, “We would let you know, we would tell you, we would inform you of what the Macedonia saints have done;” and he does not at first say, “We would let you know of the liberality which the Macedonia churches have shown;” but, “of the grace of God bestowed on the

churches of Macedonia.” What we do for God, God’s grace has first bestowed upon us. If there be any virtue, if there be any zeal, if there be any faith, if there be any love, it is the result of the grace of God bestowed upon us. Always look upon things in that light, for then you will not grow proud. Give what you may, and do what you may, you may regard it as the elect of the grace of God bestowed upon you.

*2. How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of the joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.*

They were very poor people in Macedonia but they loved God so much that they abounded in liberality. Considering how little they possessed, and how much they were tried and persecuted, they had been wonderfully generous.

*3. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;*

They were willing to give even beyond their power. They gave up to the full limit of what they could do, and then wished that they could give even more. And notice that “they were willing of themselves.” Paul had not to stir them up to do this, nor even to mention the subject to them: “They were willing of themselves.” That is the best kind of service to God which a man ever does, that in which he is willing of himself. It is the slave who is flogged to his work, the child is willing of himself. Oh, that on the altar of God, you and I may gladly place our offerings because we have been made willing of ourselves!

*4. Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.*

Paul did not have to beg them to give, but they begged him to take their gifts; and when the saints of God are in a right state, they come forward voluntarily, as Paul says that these Macedonian Christians did, “praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints” by going to Jerusalem and giving away this money where it was needed.

*5, 6. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Insomuch that we*

*desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.*

Paul said, "Titus, do not let the Corinthians be behind the Macedonians in this matter. Go and show them how they may receive similar grace."

*7. Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound to this grace also.*

These Corinthians were an instructed people, they were so well taught that they were able to carry on an open meeting for years without a minister, and the natural consequences followed, they fell into sixes and sevens, and there were divisions among them, so that Paul had to counsel them to have a minister: "I beseech you, brethren, ye know the house of Stephanas that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." They were a notable church, people of standing among them; Paul admits all that, but he says, "Do not be behindhand in your liberality to the canoe of God."

*8. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.*

And, Christian men and women, whenever you see other Christians excelling you in any grace, seek to catch up with them; why should you be in the rear rack? You are to run with patience the race that is set before you, so do not be outstripped by your fellow-runners. If God has given to one Christian much of any grace, he can, if he pleases, give as much to you.

*9. For ye know-*

These are most precious words, worthy of being written in letters of gold: "Ye know" —

*9. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

"You know the wonderful story of how you are rich through Christ's poverty. What a charge it was for him from the riches of heaven to the poverty of his manhood here, and what a change it is

for you from the poverty of your sin and ruin to the riches of his grace! Now you know this,

you do not need anybody to tell you about it, so imitate it, distribute to the poor, and especially to the poor saints, as you have the power and the opportunity.”

**10.** *And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.*

They had started a year ago, but the project had hung fire, as such things often do. Many a man is good at resolving and starting, but not so good at going on to the end.

**11.** *Now therefore perform the doing of it;*

“Do not let your good resolves be buried, let them be turned into action: ‘Now therefore perform the doing of it.’” so I might say to who are here. “You have purposed, you have determined, you have resolved a great many times; ‘Now therefore perform the doing of it.’ If it is a good resolve, it will be best to carry it out at once.”

**11, 12.** *That as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

This is how we should always act, see what we can do, and do it, not wait till we can do twice as much. There is a great waste of holy effort and of holy giving because so many people are ashamed to do a little, and therefore do nothing because they cannot do much. That is not the way for God’s children to act. With your willing mind do what you can, and God will help you to do more.

**13, 14.** *For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:*

Paul would have the rich church at Corinth give to the poor church at Jerusalem for the Corinthians themselves might be in need some day, and then the church at Jerusalem would in turn give to them. This is the law of the kingdom; if God prospers you, help another who is not being prospered just now; and then, one of these days, he also may help you in your time of necessity.

**15.** *As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.*

That was the law of the manna in the wilderness. Some people brought in a good deal, for they had a great many children, and so it was all eaten up. Some brought in a little, but God multiplied it, so that there was no lack. So, if, in providence, God gives you a large supply of good things, divide it among a large number of needy ones; and if he gives you only a small measure, be content, and do your best with it.

**16.** *But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.*

Titus thought of them as Paul did; they were like-minded in this as in many other matters.

**17,18.** *For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;*

I do not know who “the brother” was. There have been many guesses but perhaps none of them were right. You see that human praise, even in the church, is not a very lasting thing. There was somebody whom all Christians praised; yet, now, nobody knows him. So, if you get to be esteemed among men, you may be unknown, even as this good man is; but if you have the praise of God, he will never forget you.

**19.** *And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace,* Paul did not like handling the money at all. They had to press him to do it, and then he sent Titus and somebody else to take charge of it, and to keep a strict account so that they should never be blamed in the matter of this distribution. So, beloved, see that you so serve God that even the devil cannot find fault with you. Be so exact, especially with what is given to God’s cause, that no man shall ever even think that you have taken any of it to yourselves.

**19-21.** *Which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:*

*providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.*

The apostle is very particular and careful, and herein he sets an example to all of you who have anything to do with any work for God. Do not let it rest on yourselves alone; have others associated with you to share the responsibility, and help you to look after it.

**22, 23.** *And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but not much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you:*

“If anybody outside wants to know who Titus is, say that I have sent him to be the leader in this particular work. If you want to know who he is, he is ‘my partner and fellow helper concerning you.’” Well said, Paul.

**23.** *Or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ.*

This is the reply to any inquiry about the other brethren, they were probably poor men, humble men, plain preachers of the Word, yet Paul calls them “the glory of Christ.” What a wonderful thing it is that any man should be the glory of Christ! An honest, upright character a holy gracious conversation does bring glory to Christ. Men say, “If that man is a follower of Christ, he does credit to his Master.” Dear brothers and sisters, let us think of this; and if we are not the messengers of the churches, we may be “the glory of Christ.”

**24.** *Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.*

## **2 CORINTHIANS 8**

The apostle is writing concerning a certain collection which was being made for the poor saints of Jerusalem. It was from Jerusalem that the gospel had spread into Greece, and, therefore, those who had received spiritual things from the poor Jews at Jerusalem were bound by every tie of holy brotherhood to remember their benefactors in the time of famine. The apostle stirs up the Corinthian Church about this contribution.

1. *Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit*  
Or “we make you to know.”

1, 2. *Of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia. How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.*

It is good to stir one Christian up by the example of another, and Paul excites those at Corinth by the example of the churches in Macedonia —especially, no doubt, the church at Philippi. He says that they were in great affliction, and they were very poor, but yet they had been so filled with the grace of God that their very poverty had enabled them to “abound to the riches of their liberality,” for what they gave became more in proportion because they were so poor.

3. *For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves:*

Without any pressure: without even a hint — spontaneously.

4. *Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.*

“Take upon us the communion,” for that blessed word “Koinonia,” communion, is applied not only to the Lord’s supper, and to such fellowship as that but to communion with poor saints — fellowship with them by helping their necessities. And Paul says that the Macedonian Churches pressed it upon him that he should take their money, and go with it to Jerusalem, and distribute it. He appears to have been very reluctant to do this, but they pressed it upon him.

5. *And this they did, not as we hoped,*  
That is, “according to our hopes.”

6. *But first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.*

They first gave of themselves to God, and then asked Paul to take it that he might use it for God in the distribution of Christian charity among the poor saints at Jerusalem.

6, 7. *Inasmuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in*

*all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.*

They were a famous church — this church at Corinth, having gifted men in abundance more than other churches, insomuch that they did not use to have one man for a pastor, because they so abounded in brethren able to edify; and he urges them, as they were forward in all things, not to be backward in their liberality.

**8.** *I speak not by commandment,*

“I do not wish to put it upon you as a law. I want it to be spontaneous on your part.”

**8, 9.** *But by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

What a touching argument! How could he find a better? Help your brethren in Jerusalem that are in need, even though that help should pinch you, for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and what he did, and what he gave that you might be rich.

**10.** *And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.*

They had begun last year — perhaps not a year ago, but some months ago in the previous year — to talk the matter over, and to make promises; and they had been among the first to undertake the work, but as yet they had not done it.

**11.** *Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.*

They had not a minister, you see, and what is everybody’s business is nobody’s business, and so the contribution was not carried out. And in general the church at Corinth is about the worst in the New Testament, and that for this very reason — that it had not any oversight. It was the pattern church of certain brethren whom we have among us this day — in the very example of them, and they quote this as an example, whereas it is put here as a beacon, and a very excellent beacon, too, to warn us against any such thing. Everything was sixes and sevens, good people as they were. Seeing

that they had no order and no discipline, nothing got done, and they wearied the apostle's life because of that. God would have things done decently and in order, and he gives to his churches pastors after his own heart, and when he does, then is the church able to carry out her desires and her activities with something like practical common-sense. But here a year ago, months ago, they had talked the matter over, and made a promise, and now he has to say to them, "Now therefore, perform the doing of it." They had no deacons to look them up, I will be bound to say.

**12-14.** *For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want: that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:*

It is in the Christian Church alone that we shall ever find liberty equality, and fraternity thoroughly represented. There, by the life of Christ within his people spiritually, that shall be realized, and the apostle backs up this thought of his, which Bengel has beautifully put when he says "We ought to minister of our luxuries to the comfort of others, and of our comforts to the necessities of others." So we should, to keep up a balance that, when one suffers wants and another abounds, there may be an equality made.

**15.** *As it is written, He that had gathered much*  
Much manna

**15-17.** *Had nothing over: and he that had gathered little had no lack. But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.*

Or "he is going unto you," for he bore this letter unto them.

**18.** *And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches:*

And what brother was that? Nobody knows. And a brother who has praise in all the churches may be well content to have his name forgotten. Oh! it would be a sweet thing to have praise in all the churches anonymously, so that it all might go up to God. It may have been Luke. Probably it was. It may not have been Luke.

Probably it was not. We do not know who it was. But it does not signify. What matters it? As Mr. Whitfield used to say, "Let my name perish, but let Christ's name last for ever." "And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches."

*19. And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace,*

Or "with this gift."

*19, 20. Which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:*

He had other brethren associated with him, lest anybody should even hint that Paul was benefited thereby. And, oh! in the distribution of the Lord's money, it becomes us to be exceedingly careful. Paul adds this.

*21. Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.*

That the thing might be so clear and transparent that, while God knew that Paul was honest, everybody else might know it too, for others had been associated with him.

*22, 23. And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messenger of the churches, and the glory of Christ.*

How beautiful to see Paul so praising his brethren — very humble, commonplace persons as compared with himself, but he admires the grace of God in them. How very different from the general spirit of depreciation that you find even among Christian men — afraid to praise anybody, lest they should be exalted above measure. You might leave that to the devil. He will take care that they are not exalted above measure but you need not be as particular about that. Often the best thing that can be done for God's servant is to encourage him, for, though you may not know it, he may have a multitude of depressions, heavy toil and earnest care, and much watching, which may bring him down. Paul speaks well of the

brotherhood: let us try to do the same. But how does he call these simple-minded men, who are going with him to distribute this money? Does he call them the glory of Christ? Yes; Christ is the glory of God, and his people are the glory of Christ. He glories whenever he is glorified by them. They are the result of the travail of his soul, and in that sense they are his glory.

# GALATIANS

## GALATIANS 1

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 apostle-ship called in question. Does he, therefore, give up his claim to the office, and retire from the work? No, not for a moment; but 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 Saviour’s twelve 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 ever 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; nay 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,”

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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 for ever 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 ye 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 salvation 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 be 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 falsehood, 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 brethren with him, yea, and the very angels of God if they “preach any other gospel.” Let him be accursed, saith he, 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 ye 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 ye 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, these 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 in the after ages; 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 ye 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 mine 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 did believe it. He was no hypocrite, no pretender, so 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 ever to 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. He 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 Judaea 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 preacheth 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 wrought 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!

## **GALATIANS 1:11-24**

**11-17.** *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel that was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye 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 mine 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 which 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, 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 other of the apostles saw I 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 preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me.*

This exposition consisted of readings from GALATIANS 1:11-24; 2.

## **GALATIANS 2**

**1, 2.** *Then fourteen years after 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. But neither 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 privily 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, and that we are partakers of that covenant.

**6-10.** *But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: but contrawise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (for he wrought 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.*

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 the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain 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 thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou 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 yet, 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 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.*

No mere man can keep the law; 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 if 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 call 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, and not under the law of Moses.”

**20, 21.** *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth 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 come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

This exposition consisted of readings from GALATIANS 1:11-24; 2.

### **GALATIANS 2:15-21**

**15-21.** *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 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. 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. For if 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. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth 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 come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

Paul is arguing against the idea of salvation by works, or salvation by ceremonies; and he shows, beyond all question, that salvation is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Mark the strength of the apostle's argument in the 21<sup>st</sup> verse: "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in sin." That is to say, there was no need for Christ to die, the crucifixion was a superfluity, if men can save themselves by their own good works. Paul is very emphatic about the matter. He puts it as plainly as possible: "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

This exposition consisted of readings from GALATIANS 2:15 - 21; AND 3.

### **GALATIANS 2:16-21**

**16.** *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works 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 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 doctrine 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 also are 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 main-spring of all holiness. If there be 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 liveth 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 liveth after any other sort, then he liveth 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 come 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.

This exposition consisted of readings from Galatians 2:16-21, And 3.

### **GALATIANS 3**

Paul, writing, to those changeable Galatians, who had so soon deserted the faith, says to them in this chapter

**1.** *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you.*

Paul does not compliment them on being a very "thoughtful," "educated" "cultured" people; he does not care an atom about that matter, but because they had forsaken the simple truth of the gospel, he says, "O foolish Galatians, who hath 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 learn of you, Received ye 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 wrought 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 ye so foolish having begun in the Spirit, are ye 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 ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be 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.** *He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he 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 ye 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; and 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 thee 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 which be 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, or the liar, or the swearer, is under the curse.

**10.** *For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth 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 quotes again 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 doeth 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 hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*

Here is substitution; what else can the words mean? Christ hung on a tree for us, bearing our curse, in our room, and place, and stead.

**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 evermore.

**15.** *Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.*

A covenant is a covenant; whatever happens, it cannot be altered, it stands, though it was only made by men.

**16.** *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*

Quoting from the Old Testament, we may believe in the absolute plenary inspiration of that Sacred Book, because the apostle founds 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 after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.*

Is not that splendid argument? The covenant was made with Abraham that God would bless him and his seed. Well now, four hundred and thirty years after, the law was given on Sinai; but that could not affect a covenant made four hundred and thirty years before. The argument goes to prove that the covenant of grace is not affected by any law of rites and ceremonies; nay, 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 be 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.** *Wherefore then serveth 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 hath 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. Wherefore 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 also was 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 also do, when that pedagogue whipped us very sorely; I am glad that I am no longer under his power.

**26, 27.** *For ye 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 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 ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye 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 blessings, 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.

### **GALATIANS 3**

**1.** *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, —*

Paul writes as if they had come under some kind of witchcraft, and been deluded by it. This seemed to astonish the apostle, so he cries out to them "Who hath bewitched you," —

**1.** *That ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*

They had heard the plainest possible preaching from Paul and his companions. Jesus Christ had been so clearly set forth before them that they might as it were, see him as he hung upon the cross of Calvary. Yet, under some unhallowed spell, they turned aside from the faith of Christ.

**2.** *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

“You profess to have received the Spirit; did the Spirit come to you by the works of the law, or through hearing and believing the gospel?”

**3.** *Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*

“Did you begin right, and are you going to finish in some other way? Is the foundation laid in truth, and will you build falsehood upon it? Is the foundation Jesus Christ, the chief corner stone, and is the superstructure to be wood, hay, and stubble?”

**4.** *Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.*

“Have you been made to suffer through conviction of sin? Have you even been persecuted for the truth’s sake? And are you going to give it up after all that?”

**5.** *He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

“Have those miracles been wrought in your midst by the power of faith or by the works of the law?”

**6.** *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*

That is the Scriptural doctrine, faith is counted or imputed for righteousness.

**7.** *Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

Those who are justified by faith in Jesus; those whose faith is counted for righteousness, they are the children of believing Abraham, — not those who are under the law of Moses.

**8.** *And the scripture, foreseeing that and would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*

Just as Abraham was blessed, so are the nations to be blessed, that is, by faith. By faith, they become his spiritual seed; by faith, they enter into his covenant; by faith, they receive the blessings of grace.

**9.** *So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*

Just as the believing Abraham was accounted righteous, so believing men who are the spiritual seed of Abraham, are also accounted righteous.

**10.** *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

Can any man perfectly keep the whole law of God? Has any man ever continued in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them? No; and, therefore, all that the law does is to bring the curse upon those who are under its dominion, and none of them can obtain salvation by the works of the law.

**11.** *But that no man is justified by the law, in the sight of God is evident: for the just shall live by faith.*

This passage is again and again repeated in the Scriptures: "The just shall live by faith." There are no other just men living, there cannot be any other just men living, but those that live by faith.

**12.** *And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.*

The law demands doing, the gospel enjoins believing. The believing man comes in as an heir of the blessing, but, the man who trusts to his own doing is an heir of the curse.

**13.** *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*

What a wonderful doctrine this is! We should have hesitated to use such language as this had not the Holy Spirit himself moved Paul to write that Christ was "made a curse for us." He who is most blessed for ever, he who is the fountain of blessing and the channel of blessing to all who ever are blessed, was "made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." —

**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.*

Dear friends, are you living by faith upon the Son of God? Are you trusting in God? Are you believing his promises? Some think that this is a very little thing, but God does not think so. Faith is a better index of character than anything else. The man who trusts his

God, and believes his promises, is honouring God far more than is the man who supposes that by any of his own doings he can merit divine approval and favor.

**15.** *Brethren, I speak after the matter of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.*

If a covenant is once made, signed, sealed, and ratified, no honourable man would think of drawing back from it. Whatever happens afterwards, the covenant having been once made is regarded as an established fact, and it must remain.

**16, 17.** *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And 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.*

This is sound reasoning. God made a covenant with Abraham, and said that in him and in his seed all nations should be blessed. All believers are in Christ, who is here called Abraham's seed, and therefore they must be blessed. Whatever the law may say or may not say, it was not given until years after the covenant was made with Abraham, and therefore cannot affect it in any way.

**18.** *For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise:*

God gave it to Abraham by promise. It was a free gift; he did not bestow it upon the condition of merit on Abraham's part. Isaac was born, not according to the power of the flesh, but according to promise, and the whole covenant is according to free grace and divine promise.

**18, 19.** *But God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law?*

What was the use of that?

**19.** *It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made;*

The law makes us know what transgression is; it reveals its true nature. Under the hand of the Holy Spirit, it makes us see the evil of sin. We might not have perceived sin to be sin if it had not been for

the command of God not to commit it; but when the commandment comes, then we recognize sin and the evil of it.

**19-21.** *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.*

There could not have been a better law. Some talk about the law of God being too severe, too strict, too stringent, but it is not. If the design had been that men should live by the law, there could not have been a better law for that purpose; and hence it is proved that, by the principle of law nobody ever can be justified because, even with the best of laws, all men are sinful, and so need that justification which comes only by grace through faith.

**22.** *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

All of us, by nature are shut up like criminals in a prison that is so securely bolted and barred that there is no hope of escape for any who are immured within it. But why are all the doors shut and fastened? Why in order that Christ may come and open the one only eternal door of salvation: “that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believes.”

**23.** *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*

Well do I remember when I was “shut up” in this fashion. I struggled and strove with might and main to get out, but I found no way of escape. I was “shut up” until faith came, and opened the door and brought me out into “the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

**24.** *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

The pedagogue was a slave who led the children to school, and sometimes whipped them to school. That is what the law did with us; it took us under its management, and whipped us, and drove us to Christ.

**25.** *But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

Now we go to Christ willingly, cheerfully, joyfully, trusting in him with all our hearts. The pedagogue's work is done so far as we are concerned.

**26.** *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

We hear a great deal about the universal fatherhood of God, but it is all nonsense. There is no Scripture for it whatsoever. Those only are the children of God who are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

**27.** *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

"He is everything to you. He covers you, he surrounds you. You do not stand before God in your own filthy rags, but you have put on Christ."

**28.** *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

What a mercy it is to be in Christ, so that you yourself are not seen any more, but only Christ, and you accepted in him!

**29.** *And if ye be Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

"According to the promise," — not according to your works, or your deserts, but "heirs according to the promise."

### **GALATIANS 3**

**1, 2.** *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

"When the Spirit of God came upon you, and renewed you, — when he endued some of you with miraculous gifts, — did this power come by the works of the law, or through your believing the gospel? 'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?'"

**3.** *Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*

“Is this work to be partly God’s and partly your own? And if he has begun it with a basis of gold, are you to perfect it with your poor dust and clay? Are you so foolish as to attempt to do this?”

**4, 5.** *Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ?*

They knew very well that the miracles came as the result of faith, and were an attestation and seal of the gospel of faith, and not of the works of the law.

**6, 7.** *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

He was the father of the faithful — that is of the believing; — not of those who trust in their own works. These are only like Ishmael, who must be cast out of the chosen family; but the true children, the real Isaacs, are those who are born according to the promise of grace.

**8.** *And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*

That is, “in thee, because thou art the father of believers. Thou art a sort of head and prototype of men who believe in me, and so, ‘in thee shall all nations be blessed;’ and in thy seed, too, as thou shalt be the father of the Christ, shall all nations be blessed.”

**9-11.** *So then they which be 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 every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.*

If then, even those who are just live by faith, how can any expect that they shall live by their works?

**12.** *And the law is not of faith : but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.*

The law says nothing about faith; it speaks only about doing: “Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk

therein: I am the Lord your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord.”

**13.** *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*

There is the key of the mystery. Christ is our Substitute. He fulfilled the law’s demands by his perfect obedience, and he suffered the law’s utmost penalty by his death upon the cross; and, now, all those who believe in him are forever justified because of what he did for them.

**14, 15.** *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed,*

If it be legally drawn up, signed, and sealed, and witnessed, —

**15.** *No man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.*

There it stands, and an appeal can be made to it in any court of law where it may be produced.

**16, 17.** *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And 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.*

That is clear enough. The covenant made with Abraham and his seed cannot be affected by anything that was said or done on Sinai. Whatever the covenant of works may be, or say, or do, it comes in more than four centuries after this glorious covenant of grace had been signed, and sealed, and ratified; and therefore it cannot be affected, it must stand fast for ever.

**18.** *For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.*

So, then, we know it is by promise, and God must keep his promise, and we must believe it. It must be true; and if we do believe it, we shall prove it to be true, and it will be fulfilled in every jot and tittle to every believing soul.

**19-22.** *Wherefore then serveth the law? 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 band 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 hath concluded all under sin,*

Or, “shut us all up under sin.” The law has come, and proved us all guilty, and shut us all up as in a great prison from which we cannot escape by any power of our own.

**22-24.** *That the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,*

It whipped us to Christ, and taught us that we could not be saved except by Christ.

**24-28.** *That we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye 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. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Yet some foolish people still talk about our Israelitish origin. What would that matter even if it were true? “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free.” All these distinctions are done away with, and Christ is all, and believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, “are all one in Christ Jesus.”

**29.** *And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

So that all the blessings which God promised to Abraham belong to you who are believers in Christ, and you may take them, and rejoice in them; but if ye are without faith in Christ, then are ye without the one essential thing which gives you an interest in the covenant of grace.

This exposition consisted of readings from GALATIANS 2:15 - 21; AND 3.

### **GALATIANS 3**

**3:1.** *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath 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 hath 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 hath bewitched you?” It is a dangerous state, it is a devilish snare to be brought into; to be led to trust to frames, and feelings, and experiences, and doings, and prayings, 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, amongst 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 ye 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 ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye 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 ye have received Christ Jesus, the Lord,” the apostle says in another place, “so walk ye 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 go not back to the flesh.

**4.** *Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.*

This is another pertinent question.

**5.** *He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he 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 wrought 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 Saviour who was yet to come.

**7.** *Know ye 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 thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be 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 every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

Now, if every one who has once violated God's law is cursed for ever, 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 be the rule, then certainly they do not live by works.

**12.** *And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.*

So that the justified man is not justified by the law, but by faith. He standeth before God, not in what he does, not even in what the Spirit enables him to do; his own prayers, and tears, and

communings with Christ, his own labours, his earnest and indefatigable attempts to extend the kingdom of Christ, all tell for nothing in the matter of his justification. He hangeth them all upon the cross of Christ, and relieth only upon the cross, looking in no manner whatever to anything which cometh of himself.

**13, 14.** *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth 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 be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy 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 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 be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law?*

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 hath 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 unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore 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 ye 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 ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

May this be true of all of us, for Christ's sake! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from Galatians 2:16-21, And 3.

## **GALATIANS 4 AND 5:1**

**1-5.** *Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 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.*

Like little children, the Jewish believers were under the law. They observed this ceremony and that, just as children, even though they may be heirs to vast estates, yet, while they are in their minority, are under tutors and governors. But now in Christ we have come of age, and we have done with those school-books and that

tutorship, and we have received the adoption of sons. Now, we have joy and peace in believing; we have begun to enter into our possession; we have the earnest of it already, and by-and-by we shall receive the fullness of the inheritance of the saints in light.

**6.** *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

While the Jewish believers, like children, were under the law, they did not have such direct access to the Father as we have. They could not enter into such close fellowship with God as now we can. We who are the sons of God, really born into his family, feel within us a something that makes us call God, "Father," not only in prayer, saying, "Our Father, which art in heaven;" but, inwardly, when we are not in the attitude of prayer, our hearts keep on crying, "Father, Father." The Jew may say, "Abba, and the word is very sweet; but we cry, "Father," and it means the same thing.

**7.** *Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

All God's sons are, in a certain sense, his servants; but there is a sense in which servants are not sons. We, therefore, are not like those servants who have no relationship to their master, and no share in his possessions; but we are sons. Whatever service we render, we are still sons, and we have a share in all that our Father has; we are heirs, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Are you living up to your privileges, brethren? Are we any of us fully realizing what this heirship means? Do we not often live as if we were only servants toiling for hire? Do we not tremble at God as if we were his slaves rather than his sons? Let us remember that we are God's sons, his heirs; and let us come close to him, let us take possession of the blessed inheritance which he has provided for us.

**8-11.** *Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.*

Among the heathen, there were divers "lucky" and "unlucky" days; sacred days, and days in which they indulged in sensual excess. They had even "holy" months and "unholy" months. Now,

all that kind of thing is done away with in the case of a Christian: he is set free from such weak and beggarly superstitions. Among the Jews, there were certain sacred festivals, times that were more notable than other seasons; but they also were done away with in Christ. We observe the Christian Sabbath; but beyond that, to the true believer, there should be no special observance of days, and months, and years. All that is a return to “the weak and beggarly elements” from which Christ has delivered him. That bondage is all ended now; but there are some who still “observe days, and months, and times, and years;” and Paul says to them, “I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.” Every day is holy, every year is holy, to a holy man; and every place is holy, too, to the man who brings a holy heart into it.

**12.** *Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.*

“Be perfectly at home with me, for I am so with you. Though you Galatians have treated me very badly, yet ye have not really injured me, and I freely overlook your ill manners toward me.”

**13-15.** *Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.*

The apostle remembers how they received him at first, his gospel was to them like life from the dead; and though he was full of infirmities, — perhaps had weak eyes, — perhaps had a stammering tongue, — perhaps was at that time very much depressed in spirit, — yet, he says, “You received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. You loved me so much that, if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.”

**16.** *Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?*

There come times, with all God’s servants, when certain people proclaim something fresh and new in doctrine; and then the old messenger of God, who was blessed to them, comes to be despised. I have lived long enough to see dozens of very fine fancies started, but they have all come to nothing; I daresay I shall see a dozen

more, and they will all come to nothing. But here I stand; I am not led astray either by novelties of excitement or novelties of doctrine. The things which I preached at the first, I preach still, and so I shall continue, as God shall help me. But I know, in some little measure, what the apostle meant when he said, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

**17-20.** *They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always 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 be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.*

The point of doubt was, that they had been led astray by legal teachers; they had been made to believe that, after all, there was something in outward ceremonies, something in the works of the law, and so they had come under bondage again. So the apostle says,

**21-23.** *Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; —*

By Abraham's own strength; —

**23.** *But he of the freewoman was by promise.*

Born when Abraham and his wife were past age, — born by the power of God's Spirit, according to promise.

**24.** *Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants: the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar.*

It is the strength of the flesh which leads to bondage.

**25, 26.** *For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

That is, of all of us who believe in Christ Jesus. We are born of the free-woman, not of the bondwoman; not born of the covenant of works, and in the strength of the creature; but born of the covenant of grace, in the power of God, according to promise.

**27, 28.** *For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*

If we are God's children, it is not by our own strength, or by the strength of the flesh, in any measure or degree; but it is by the grace of God, and the promise of God, that we are what we are.

**29, 30.**, *But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture?*

Make a compromise, and be friends? Let Isaac and Ishmael live in the same house, and lie in the same bed? No!

**30, 31.** *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 5:1.** *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

God grant us grace to keep to grace! God grant us faith enough to live by faith, even to the end, as the freeborn children of God, for his name's sake! Amen.

#### **GALATIANS 4:12-31**

**12.** *Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye 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.** *Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye 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 ye spake 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, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am 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 noonday against everything of that kind, and so the Galatians got at last to be angry with him. Well, he could not help that, but it did grieve him.

**17.** *They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect 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 good to be zealously affected always 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 be 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, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye 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 gendereth 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 answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.*

It is old Judaism coming from Sinai, “This do, and thou shalt live,” and all the children that are born under it are children of nature, and 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, thou barren that bearest not: break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath 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 hear 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 saith 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.*

This exposition consisted of readings from GALATIANS 4:12-31; 5:1-4, 19-26; 6:1-11.

## **GALATIANS 5**

**1.** *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

“You are not under the law, but under grace. Do not subject yourselves, therefore, to legal principles. Do not live as if you were working for wages, and were earning your own salvation. Do not submit yourselves to the ritual and commandments of man, which would rob you of your liberty in many ways, but having once become a free man, never again wear the chain of a slave: ‘Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.’

Because you are the seed of Isaac, who was born according to the promise, you are not the children of the bondwoman, you are not Ishmaelites; therefore, as you were born free, as Christ has made you free by virtue of your new birth, stand fast in that glorious liberty.”

**2, 3.** *Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be 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.*

If you begin being saved by the law, you must go through with it. You cannot take the principle of law and the principle of grace, and blend those two together. They are like oil and water, they will never mix. If salvation be of works, it is not of grace; and if it be of grace, it is not of works. You cannot go upon the two contrary principles of merit and of favour.

**4.** *Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*

You have turned aside from it you are not standing with one foot upon grace and one foot upon the law but you have gone right away from grace. You must cleave to one or the other. If you take the law to be your hope, you must keep to it; and the end will be that you will die in despair.

**5, 6.** *For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision but faith which worketh by love.*

It is not any rite, and it is not the neglect of any rite which can produce righteousness. It is as easy to trust in your non-observance of a ceremony as to trust in the ceremony itself, and it will be quite as delusive. It is faith in Christ that brings righteousness, the “faith which worketh by love.”

**7.** *Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*

“You Galatians seemed to receive the gospel very readily, and to be very earnest in obeying it; what has caused you to turn aside to the old legal righteousness? You are very changeable, very fickle; you seemed very energetic in running the Christian race; whatever has got in your way?

‘Who did hinder you?’ Somebody or other must have done so.”

**8.** *This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.*

“It does not come from God. He called you to faith in his dear Son, and to all those virtues and graces which naturally spring from the root of faith. Somebody else has called you aside, some false shepherd, who is but a wolf in sheep’s clothing, and who would destroy you if he could.”

**9.** *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*

One false doctrine very soon sours all your belief; the whole lump is leavened with it. If you have a wrong ground of confidence, you are wrong altogether.

**10.** *I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.*

Depend upon it, every man who troubles a church with false doctrine is amenable to the High Court above; and, sooner or later, he may expect even a temporal judgment here below.

**11.** *And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.*

“The offence of the Cross” is that it sets up faith as the infinite merit of Christ’s atonement, and knocks down all confidence in outward ritual and ceremonies. Paul says that, if he had preached the flesh-pleasing doctrines of men, he would not have been persecuted; but the fact that he was persecuted was a proof that he was standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free.

**12.** *I would they were even cut off which trouble you.*

Excommunicated, and put out of the church; nay, it would be better if they were even dead, rather than that they should live to spread such evil even in a Christian church. Sometimes, when we think of the interests of immortal souls, we are apt to grow indignant, and rightly so, towards willfully false teachers.

**13.** *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*

Do not let liberty become license; do not say, “I may do this or that, and therefore I will do it because it pleases me.” You are not to do anything because it pleases you, but you are to do everything because it pleases God. When a man is no longer a slave to sin, or

self, or Satan, let him begin to serve his brethren: "By love serve one another."

**14.** *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

The legal spirit is all for expansion; it multiplies its commands, and lays down its ritual for this, and that, and the other; but the gospel spirit is all for condensation. It has condensed the whole law into a single word, that is "love."

**15.** *But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*

This man finds fault, the other must have his own way, a third is for something quite new, a fourth is for nothing but what is antique, and so they fall to squabbling and quarrelling.

**16.** *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

Be obedient to that great principle of the Spirit which goes with the doctrine of grace and salvation by faith, and then you will not be obedient to that lusting of the flesh which is in you by nature.

**17.** *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

You are pulled about by two contrary forces; you are dragged downward by the flesh, and you are drawn upward by the Spirit.

**18.** *But if ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law.*

The Spirit never brings the soul into bondage, the terrors and the fears which come of legal slavery are not the work of the Spirit of God. Where he works, holiness is delight, and the service of God is a continual joy. Oh, that we may be thus led of the Spirit!

**19.** *Now the works of the flesh are manifest,*

They are clear, plain, self-condemned.

**19-21.** *Which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelling, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Observe that the gospel gives no toleration to sin. Some people tell us that the doctrine of faith is not practical, but they know better although they say that. They have only to observe those who are actuated by the principle of faith, and they will find them abounding in good works, while the men who are swayed by the principle of law talk a great deal about works, but have little enough of them in practice. The gospel denounces sin, ay, and kills it; it gives us the force with which we fight against it and overcome it.

**22, 23.** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

Either human or divine; everybody is agreed that these things are all good.

**24.** *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

Condemned it to die, nailed it up to the cross, and kept it in a dying, mortifying posture.

**25.** *If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit.*

If our spiritual life is the result of a divine work, let our actions be in harmony with it: "If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit."

**26.** *Let us not be desirous of vain glory,-*

We call it glory, but it is vain glory. It is marred by vanity if it arises from anything done by us. Glory for you or for me because of anything that we can do is too absurd an idea to be entertained for a moment: "Let us not be desirous of vain glory,"-

**26.** *Provoking one another,-*

For, whenever a man is proud, and blustering, and vain-glorious, he is sure to provoke somebody or other, and then they who are so provoked fall into another sin, the sin of-

**26.** *Envyng one another.*

O brethren, let us try to get over all this, and reach out to that blessed state of love which will bring to us peace and joy in the Holy Ghost!

## **GALATIANS 5:1-4, 19-26**

**1-4.** *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ had made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be 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 whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*

If you mean to have anything to with salvation by works, get you gone; you are the children of the bond-woman.

**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, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and such like:*

A black catalogue, 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 time 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, longsuffering, 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 should boast 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 vain glory,*

A very common sin — wishing to shine. Whether we deserve to be honoured or not, still wanting to be fore-horse in the team, and to take the leading place. “Let us not be desirous of vain glory.”

**26. *Provoking one another, envying one another.***

If each would strive who should do the greatest deeds of love, and each were willing to take the lowest place, then this evil would never be known again.

This exposition consisted of readings from GALATIANS 4:12-31; 5:1-4, 19-26; 6:1-11.

**GALATIANS 5:13-26**

Remember, beloved brethren, that the Epistle to the Galatians is one in which Paul, with especial clearness, proves the doctrine of justification by faith alone. So much is this the case, that the famous Commentary of Martin Luther upon this Epistle is perhaps the strongest work extant upon the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. But that doctrine was never intended to be separated from the Scriptural teaching concerning the fruit of faith, namely, good works; and, hence, we find, in the close of this very Epistle, the strongest possible declaration that, if men live in sin, they will reap the result of sin; and that only if, by grace, they are brought to walk in holiness, will they win the rewards of grace.

**13. *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh,***

“Do not make licence out of your liberty. Remember that liberty from sin is not liberty to sin.”

**13, 14. *But by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.***

The condensation of the whole law is contained in that one word “love.” In the first table, we are taught to love God; and the commands of the second table teach us to love our neighbor.

**15. *But if ye bite and devour one another,***

Finding fault, slandering, injuring, bearing malice, and so on: —“If ye bite and devour one another,”

**15. *Take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.***

“You will eat one another up; you will, each one, condemn his neighbor.” Paul represents the great Judge coming, and waiting

outside the door; and when he hears two men condemning one another, he says to himself, "I will confirm their verdict; they have mutually condemned each other, I will say 'Amen' to it." What a sad thing it is if professed Christians are found thus condemning one another!

**16.** *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

Walk under the Spirit's power, following his guidance. The Spirit never leads a man into sin. He never conducts him into self-indulgence and excess.

**17.** *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

How often that is the case! Ye would be perfect, but "ye cannot do the things that ye would." We would, if possible, escape from every evil thought; we would not even hear of anything sinful, if we could help it.

**18, 19.** *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,*

Any kind of sensual indulgence — whatever it may be — a lustful glance, the cherishing of an unclean desire,— the utterance of a foul expression, all this is condemned, as well as the overt acts of adultery and fornication.

**20, 21.** *Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness,*

Is drunkenness actually put by the apostle after murder, as though it were something worse than that terrible crime? Or is it not, oftentimes, the case that drunkenness lies at the bottom of the murder?

**21.** *Revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Paul never said, nor ever thought of saying, that a man might live in sin, that grace might abound. No, no; these evil things must be given up. Christ has come to save us from every evil work. And this is the salvation that we preach,— not simply salvation from

hell, but salvation from sin, which is the very fire that has kindled the infernal flame. But how different from all this evil is the fruit of the Spirit!

**22.** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love,*

Universal love; first, to God; next, to his people; and, then, to all mankind. Have we that fruit of the Spirit? If so, it will make us of a very amiable disposition; it will dethrone selfishness, and set up holy affections within our heart.

**22, 23.** *Joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:*

Joy and peace seem to blossom and ripen out of love. Longsuffering, too, is part of the fruit of the Spirit. You will be hourly tried, but the Spirit of God will give you patience to suffer long and to endure much. You will also have gentleness. Some people are very hard, stern, severe, quick-tempered, passionate; but the true follower of Christ will be gentle and tender, even as he was.

**23.** *Against such there is no law.*

Neither God nor man has ever made a law against these things; the more there is of them, the better will it be for everybody. Oh, that they prevailed all over the world!

**24.** *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

A crucified Christ is the leader of a crucified people. Oh, to have all the affections and lusts of the flesh nailed up! They may not be actually dead; for those who are crucified may still live on for some hours, but they are doomed to die, their life is a very painful one, and it is hastening to a close. A man who is crucified cannot get down from the cross to do what he wills; and, oh! it is a great blessing to have our sinful self thus nailed up. Ah, sir! you may struggle, but you cannot get down; you may strive and cry, but your hands and feet are nailed; you cannot go into active, actual sin. The Lord grant that the nails may hold very fast, that none of the strugglings of our old nature may be able to pull out those nails that have fastened it up to the cross!

**25.** *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

If that be our real life, let it also be our course of action.

**26.** *Let us not be desirous of vain glory,—*

Do not let us want to be accounted as somebody; for, if we do, we prove that we are really nobody. Nobody is anybody till he is willing to be nobody; as long as he wants to be somebody, he is nobody and nothing.

**26.** *Provoking one another, envying one another.*

God save us from that and every other form of evil!

This exposition consisted of readings from GALATIANS 5:13-26; AND GALATIANS 6:1-10.

## **GALATIANS 5:13-26**

**13.** *For, brethren, ye 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 began urging the Christians of Galatians 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; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*

Oh, if that "one word" were so engraven 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 ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*

When dogs and wolves bite one another, it is according to their nature; but it is bad indeed when sheep take to biting one another. If I must be bitten at all, let me rather be bitten by a dog 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 ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye 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 ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

If your life is guided by the Spirit of God, — if you are spiritual men, and your actions are wrought in the power of the Spirit, “ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

**17.** *For the flesh lusteth 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 ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*

The law is ever 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, envyings, 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 the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time 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, longsuffering, 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 fast, 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? Ay, that they do, for the best of men are but men at their best, and the godliest saint is liable to fall into the fondest sin unless the grace of God prevent. 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 us all; 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.

This exposition consisted of readings from GALATIANS 5:13-26; and 6:1, 2.

## **GALATIANS 6:1, 2**

**1.** *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, —*

If he travels so slowly that his faults catch him up, and knock him down: “If a man be overtaken in a fault,” —

1. *Ye which 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 thyself, lest thou 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 thyself lest thou also be overtaken in a fault.” No, but, “lest thou 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 ye one another’s burdens, and fulfill the law of Christ.*

This exposition consisted of readings from GALATIANS 5:13-26; and 6:1, 2.

## **GALATIANS 6:1-10**

1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault,—*

He is a slow traveler; he is not speeding swiftly on the way to heaven, so the fault overtakes him. Had he been quicker of pace, he might have outstripped it; but he is “overtaken in a fault.” What then? Turn him out of the church? Have done with him? No. “If a man be overtaken in a fault,” —

1. *Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness;*

Pick him up, help him to run better than he did before.

1. *Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

Paul does not say, “Lest thou also fall;” but, “Lest thou also be tempted,” — as much as to say, “You will be sure to fall if you are tempted;” and that man, who thinks that other people ought to be cast off because they have committed a fault, is so proud in his own heart that he only needs to be tempted, and he would fall, too. This is a very expressive way of putting the matter: “Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

2. *Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

Help your brethren. If you see that they have more to do than they can accomplish, take a share of their labour. If they have a

heavier burden than they can bear, try to put your shoulder beneath their load, and so lighten it for them.

**3.** *For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*

Paul does not say, “He deceiveth other people;” no, “he deceiveth himself.” As a general rule, other people find him out, they learn what he really is, but “he deceiveth 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 is, after all, a burden which we cannot carry for others, and which we cannot shift upon others. There are burdens of care, and sorrow, and trouble, which we can take from other men’s shoulders; but the great burden of responsibility before God, each man must himself carry.

**6.** *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.*

Those who are taught, should maintain those who are their teachers as far as they are able to do so.

**7.** *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

That is true under the gospel as well as under the law.

**8.** *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;*

That is what always comes to the flesh; it decays and corrupts.

**8.** *But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

No corruption shall come to that which belongs to the Spirit: “He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

**9, 10.** *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season are shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are if the household of faith.*

This exposition consisted of readings from GALATIANS 5:13-26; AND GALATIANS 6:1-10.

## **GALATIANS 6:1-11**

**1.** *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou 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 be 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. 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 thyself lest thou also be tempted." He seems to take it for granted that we probably should, if we were tempted as the other brother was.

**2.** *Bear ye 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 think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth 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 deceiveth 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 teacheth 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 whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap*

What the flesh always comes to by-and-bye.

**8.** *Corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit*

By faith in Christ — by being led of 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, it 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 brethren in Christ. Let them have a Benjamin's portion.

**11.** *Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.*

Paul did not often write his own epistles. It is thought that he had a defect of the eyes. He employed an amanuensis generally. 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.

This exposition consisted of readings from GALATIANS 4:12-31; 5:1-4, 19-26; 6:1-11.

## **GALATIANS 6:6-18**

**6, 7.** *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

Paul puts that in connection with the support of those who are teachers of the truth, and I have sometimes thought that, in certain churches where God's ministers have been starved, it was not very wonderful that the people should be starved, too. They thought so little about the pastor that they left him in need, so it was not strange that, as they sowed little, they reaped little. One of these misers said

that his religion did not cost him more than a shilling a year, and somebody replied that he thought it was a shilling wasted on a bad thing, for his poor religion was not worth even that small amount.

**8.** *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;*

He shall reap what flesh turns to in due time: “he shall of the flesh reap corruption.” What is the end of flesh? The fairest flesh, that ever was moulded from the most beautiful form, ends in corruption; and if we live for the flesh, and sow to it, we shall reap “corruption.”

**8.** *But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.*

He shall reap what the Spirit really is, and what the Spirit really generates: “life everlasting.” Of course, if a man sows tares, he reaps tares. If he sows wheat, he reaps wheat. If we sow to the flesh, we reap corruption. If we sow to the Spirit, we shall “reap life everlasting.”

**9.** *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

It is a pity to faint just when the time is coming to reap; so, sow on, brother and sister, sow on!

**10.** *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

Extend your love, your charity, to all mankind; but let the center of that circle be in the home where God has placed you, — in the home of his people: “especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

**11.** *Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.*

I suppose that he meant, “See what big characters I have made. My eyes are weak, and so, when I do write a letter,” says Paul, “in the dimness of this dungeon, with my poor weak eyes, and my hands fettered, I have to write text-hand, and give it to you in large letters. Well,” he says, “then carry it out in big letters. You see with what large letters I have written to you, now emphasize it all, take it as emphatic, and carry it out with great diligence. As I have written this with mine own hand, and not used an amanuensis, I beseech you to pay the more attention to it, you Galatians, who seem to be so

bewitched that, to deliver you from false doctrine, and an evil spirit, I would even write a letter with my own blood if it were needful.”

**12, 13.** *As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.*

“See,” say they, “these Gentiles. We have converted them, and we have got them circumcised. Is not that a wonderful thing? “No, not at all, for he says,

**14.** *But God foretold 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.*

“I have ceased to care”, says Paul, “about glorying in men, and making other people glory in my converts. The world is dead to me, and I to it.”

**15-17.** *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*

I have the marks of the whips upon my body. I am the branded slave of Jesus Christ. There is no getting the marks out of me. I cannot run away. I cannot deny that he is my Master and my Owner: “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus’.

**18.** *Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

And that is our benediction to you. The Lord fulfill it to each one of you!

# EPHESIANS

## EPHESIANS 1, AND 2:1

*1, 2. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

He wishes them grace, first, and peace afterwards, which is the right and natural order. There is no lasting peace without grace. There is no peace worth having which does not spring from a work of grace in the soul. “Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

*3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

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

*3. Who have blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

“Blessed,” says he, “be God, who hath blessed us.” Well may we bless him with our feeble thanks who has blest us with his might; mercies. Nothing makes a man bless God like God’s blessing him. “He has blessed us,” says the apostle, “with all spiritual blessings.” The children of God have not only some blessings, but all they want. They are all theirs — all for time and all for eternity, but they are all in Christ. There is no blessing out of Christ. All the fullness of blessing dwells in Jesus, and in him only. And if thou wouldest be blessed, thou must come to Christ for a blessing. He has “blest us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

*4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

The first great blessing of the covenant of grace is our election. We were chosen, but chosen in Christ — chosen not because we

were holy, but chosen that we should be holy. The great object of the divine choice is our holiness. And let no man say that he is chosen of God unless God is working in him to this divine end, namely, holiness of character.

**5.** *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

After election comes adoption. Men are not by nature the children of God but they are heirs of wrath. And this is very clear, because a man never adopts his own children. But adoption in itself proves that by nature we are not the children of God, but he adopts us. “Then are ye begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” Happy they who know their adoption — who feel in themselves the spirit of children, and can cry, “Abba, Father,” as they look up to God tonight. This is in Christ Jesus, for nothing comes to us except by him.

**6.** *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

Christ is so acceptable to God that that acceptance is sufficient to spread over all those who are in him. And tonight every believer here is accepted before God, but it is through Jesus Christ. Do notice that. Nothing comes but by that silver pipe. “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.”

**7.** *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

Redemption by Christ, forgiveness by Christ, still everything through the Crucified. Those dear wounds of his are the five sacred founts from which a world of blessing flows to bless poor needy sinners. Well may we say, “None but Christ,” for, indeed, there is none but Christ who can bless us.

**8-10.** *Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth: even in him:*

All the things that are in Christ are to be gathered together — believing Jews no longer to be divided from believing Gentiles.

Today the Church of God is separated — disfigured and weakened by divers sects and parties, but it shall not be always so. There is a gathering under the Christ, and he will in the fullness of time perfectly accomplish it.

**11, 12.** *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

Some people are dreadfully frightened at that word “predestination.” I am always astonished when members of the Church of England are so, for if they will turn to their own articles, they will find that the high end comfortable doctrine of predestination is there taught. It is to be wisely handled, but it is not to be gagged and sent into a corner, as it is by some. Are there truths in Scripture that are not to be taught? If any say so then I charge him with being like the Jesuit, who hides a part of what he believes. Nay, the whole of God’s truth is to be declared, and whatsoever we find in this book, that are we to state, and the keeping back of precious truth will be required of such as are guilty of it at the last great day.

**13-23. 2:1.** *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the*

*head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

So that what he did for Christ he has done for you. He raised him and he has raised you, and, having begun thus to quicken you, he will go on to lift you up and to exalt you till you sit with him upon his throne. The only question, dear friends, is this. Do we belong to these of whom Paul here speaks? We look to the first verse to see who they are, and we find he is addressing the faithful in Christ Jesus; that is, those who are believing in Christ Jesus. If we are believing in him, then all the privileges, which are mentioned in this Chapter belong to us, and we are quickened and we shall be exalted even as Christ is, at the Father's right hand. So be it, gracious Lord.

## **EPHESIANS 1**

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

**1-2.** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus; grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

All down through the ages this benediction comes to us, even to as many of us as are "the faithful in Christ Jesus." "Grace be to you," brethren and sisters, grace in every form of it, the free favor of God, all that active force of grace which comes of his unmerited love. May you have a fresh draught of it at this time! "and peace." May you feel a deep peace with God, with your own conscience, and with all the world! Oh, that you might find an atmosphere of quiet calm about your mind at this very moment! The double blessing of "grace" and "peace" comes "from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

**3-4.** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,*

One of the first doctrines of our holy faith is that of the union of all believing souls with Christ. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Apart from Christ we are nothing; in Christ we have “all spiritual blessings.” We are rich as Christ is rich, when we are united to him by the living bond of faith. Another great doctrine of Holy Scripture is that of election. We are blessed in Christ according as the Father “hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” Why did God choose any unto eternal life? Was it because of any holiness in them then existing, or foreseen to exist? No, by no means; for we read that: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.”

**4.** *That we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

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

**5.** *Having predestinated us*

Having destined us before we were born,

**5.** *Unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

The chosen ones are adopted; they become the children of God. The universal Fatherhood of God, except in a very special sense, is a doctrine totally unknown to Scripture. God is the Father of those whom he adopts into his family, who are born again into his family, and no man hath any right to believe God to be his Father except through the new birth, and through adoption. And why God thus elects or adopts is declared here: “According to the good pleasure of his will.” He does as he pleases. That old word of God is still true: “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Men do not like that doctrine; it galls them terribly; but it is the truth of God for all that.

He is Master and King, and he will sit on the throne, and none shall drag him thence.

**6.** *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

There is another precious doctrine, the acceptance of those who are adopted. We are beloved of God; he has a complacency toward us; he takes a delight in us; we are acceptable in his sight. Oh, what a blessing this is! But remember that it is all in Christ: "Accepted in the beloved." Because Christ is accepted, therefore those who are in him are accepted.

**7-8.** *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*

In the working out of the economy of grace, God has been lavish with his love; but yet there have been wisdom and prudence in it. He did not suffer the full light of the gospel to break in upon our eyes at first, lest we should have been blinded by it. Jesus had many things to say unto his disciples; but they could not bear them all at once; so, by little and little he has led us on, and led us up, abounding always in his grace, and only limiting the display of it by our capacity to receive it.

**9-10.** *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

Everything that is in Christ shall be gathered in; all his chosen, all that the Father gave him, all that he hath redeemed by blood, all that he hath effectually brought into union with himself shall be gathered together in one. There shall be one flock under one Shepherd.

**11.** *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance,*

Not only shall we have it, but we have it now. We have heaven in the price of it, in the principles of it, in the promise of it, in the foretaste of it.

**11-12.** *Being predestined according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

The enmity of men's hearts to this doctrine of predestination was seen in the House of Commons, not a fortnight ago, when one who ought to have known better talked about "the gloomy tenets of Calvin." I know nothing of Calvin's gloomy tenets; but I do know that I read here of predestination, and I read here that God hath his own way, and his own will, and that he reigns and rules, and so he will until the world's end; and all who are loyal subjects wish God to rule. He is a traitor who would not have God to be King; for who is infinitely good and kind as God is? Let him have his divine will. Who wishes to restrain him? Whether we wish is or not, however, the Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice, and let his adversaries tremble. Our predestination is "according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

**13-14.** *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

Those who believe in Christ have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them: the Holy Spirit is a part of heaven, "the earnest of our inheritance"; and wherever he dwells, it is not possible that the heart should lose the inheritance. It is entailed upon those in whom the Spirit dwells. Judge, there, dear brethren, whether the Spirit of God dwells in you or no.

**15-23.** *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,*

*far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things in the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

How Paul glows as he writes on this great theme! He waxes warm, and rises to an enthusiasm of eloquence. We could not stop to explain his words; that were to spoil their mystic poetry. Oh, to have a heart that can glorify Christ as Paul did! Truly, if we know ourselves to be one with Christ, and know the privileges which come to us through that blessed gate, we may indeed extol him with all our heart and soul.

## **EPHESIANS 1**

We frequently read this chapter and the whole of this Epistle because it has been well remarked that the Epistle to the Ephesians is a body of divinity in miniature. Here all the great doctrines of the gospel are discussed; here all the great precepts are laid down for the guidance of believers. He who would understand the theology of Christ Jesus should read the Epistle to the Ephesians with great care.

**1, 2.** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father,*

There must be “grace” first; “peace” comes afterwards. They seek heavenly blessings in the wrong order who try to gain peace first, and then grace. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked;” and he who has a peace which does not own grace for its parent has a false peace,— a peace where there is no peace; — but let us first have grace in our souls, then shall our peace be “as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea.” Note here, as Luther has said on a corresponding verse in the Epistle to the Galatians, the apostle says, “Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father;” and lest that terrible name should affright us, he has joined therewith the name of God the Son, and sweetly put in

**2.** *And from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

We can have nothing to do with an absolute God. It is God in Christ whom we love,— whom we adore,— who alone is our Saviour.

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

The apostle commences by laying down the great doctrine of predestinating love. There is little gospel preached where election is denied. We carvel that some of us should be regarded as in error because we preach the doctrine of God's divine sovereignty in giving grace to men; whereas, in former times, the opponents of that glorious system would have been reckoned as the heretics. Turn to all the great creeds that are preserved, and you shall find that truth mentioned. Above all, we can scarcely conceive that any person who is a member or a minister of the Established Church, and finding election in his own Church's articles, can, in the least degree, deny it. It is the glory of that Church that it has a Calvinistic creed, and so far it is in harmony with the Scriptures.

**5, 6.** *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

Adoption follows predestination. We were chosen of God ere time began; and the result of that choice is, that he puts us into his family. In the fifth verse, the apostle declares that the only reason for our adoption, or for our election, rests in the good pleasure of God Almighty. There is nothing in man which can merit God's regard; and when we enter heaven, we shall even there sing,—

“What was there in me that could merit esteem,

Or give the Creator delight ?

’Twas even so, Father, I ever must sing,

‘Because it seemed good in thy sight.’”

Mark here the channel through which all God's mercies run. Jesus Christ is the channel through which grace flows to us; we are chosen in him; we are adopted by Jesus Christ to himself; and we are “accepted in the Beloved.” It is said of that eminently holy man,

Harington Evans, that, when near death, he asked his friends to give this message to his church. "Tell them," said he, "I am accepted in the Beloved." Can we say, my brethren, that we are accepted in the Beloved? Can we put our hand upon our heart, and each one say, "I may not be accepted by my fellow-creatures, I may not be acknowledged by them; and, certainly, before my God, I can never be accepted in myself; but in the Beloved, clothed with his righteousness, and standing in his person, as a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, I am 'accepted in the Beloved'?"

*7-10. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

The main purpose of the gospel is to exalt Christ and to glorify God. We forget God's great design if we look only to humanity. If we regard salvation as a means only of lifting up our race from its fall, and putting it among the princes, we have made a mistake. We should remember that God's glory is a greater object even than man's salvation. Not so much to save us, did God give his Son, as to honour himself, and to glorify that Son of his; and we should always remember that the gospel has for its chief aim the glory of all the attributes of the Divine Being. He has determined at last to gather together in Christ all things that are in heaven and in earth. Some foolish persons have wrested this text, to prove the absurd doctrine of the final restitution of the lost; they have said that even the fallen spirits in hell are to be restored. We find it not in this text; we have it particularly said, "things in heaven and things on earth." But there is no mention made of those concerning whom it was long ago said, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." I have often thought that these words of the angel are conclusive with regard to the eternity of future punishment. Once dead, immutability is stamped upon our state; once let us die, and our destiny can never be changed.

There are no acts of pardon passed  
In the cold grave to which we haste;  
But darkness, death, and long despair,  
Reign in eternal silence there.

But “things which are in heaven, and which are on earth” are, “in the dispensation of the fullness of times,” to be gathered together in one, “even in him,”

**11-14.** *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

I cannot help remarking how continually the apostle uses such expressions as “in Christ,” “in whom,” “in him.” He will not have a doctrine apart from Christ; he will not mention a single blessing, or a single mercy, without Christ. I believe there is no way of preaching gospel doctrines truly apart from the Master. In Christ’s own days, if you had asked one of his followers what he believed, he would not have been long telling you; he would not have pointed to fifty doctrines, but he would have pointed to Christ, and said, “I believe in him.” You might have asked him, fifty times, “But what do you believe?” and he would have replied, “I believe in him; he is in himself the great embodiment of my faith; his person carries within it all the great doctrines which I receive from him; he is the Truth; I believe him, and I believe in him.” Let us learn, then, always to trace our mercies to Christ Jesus, to look upon every blessing as being the purchase of his blood, and never to ask any mercy, nor endeavor to obtain any blessing, except entirely in connection with him. Let us say to him,—

Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life:  
Grant us that Way to know,  
That Truth to keep, that Life to win,  
Whose joys eternal flow.

15. *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,*

Whether they live at Ephesus or elsewhere, whether they exactly agree with your opinion or not,—

16-23. *Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what it the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

Calvin has a striking remark upon this verse, “the Church is the fullness of Christ.” “This is the highest honour of the Church that, until Christ is united to us, the Son of God reckons himself in some measure imperfect;” and so he is, for what would a king be without his subjects? A mockery; yea, and all the members of Christ’s mystical body — the Church — are necessary to make a whole Christ. If the very least believer shall be absent at last, Christ will not be complete. It is not possible that one of those whom his Father has given him should not at last be found at his right hand. All the sheep of the good Shepherd will be gathered into the heavenly fold. We rejoice to know that there is such a connection as this between ourselves and Christ; here is our glory and our boast; and here is our trust. We believe that—

His honour is engaged to save  
The meanest of his sheep;  
All that his Heavenly Father gave  
His hands securely keep.  
Nor death, nor hell, shall e’er remove  
His favourites from his breast;

In the dear bosom of his love  
They must for ever rest.

## **EPHESIANS 1**

**1, 2.** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints, which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The apostle desires just the same blessing for us, who are “the faithful in Christ Jesus,” as he did for the saints at Ephesus. He longs that we also may be filled with grace and peace, “from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” And the wish of the apostle is according to the will of God, who would have us abound in grace and in peace. Some of you Christian people are troubled in mind, yet your Lord said to his disciples and through them to you, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Jesus knew that, in the world, you should have tribulation; but he willed that, in him, you should have peace; and the way to get that peace is by getting grace. “Grace be to you, and peace.” The more gracious you are, the more easily will you bear the trying circumstances, which surround you. Look not for peace apart from grace; but when you have grace, you have a right to peace.

**3.** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

I notice how often, in the Epistles, benedictions are followed by doxologies; this is because the true heart loves to bless the Lord. What a rich treasure we have who are blessed “with all spiritual blessings”! There is nothing we can need but what is provided for us by our gracious God. Why are you poor, then, when God “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”? Is it not because you often forget to go to the heavenly in Christ, and begin looking to the earthly in yourselves? There is nothing but starvation there, but all true riches are found in the heavenly in Christ.

*4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love*

The apostle did not ignore the glorious and blessed doctrine of divine election; he delighted to meditate upon it, and to speak of it. I wish that some Christians, nowadays, were not so much afraid of it. All spiritual blessings come to us in this way, this is the fountainhead of all favor and grace: "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world." The object of our election, that to which God hath chosen us in Christ is, "that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." Unless thou art holy, how canst thou talk of being chosen of God, for the elect are chosen unto holiness, chosen to be delivered from all blame through the love and grace of God.

*5, 6. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

It is well said, by an old writer, that there is no book, which is written with such brevity as the Bible; it seems to give us the condensed essence of truth in the smallest possible space. What a mass of thought there is in those few lines, which I have just read to you! We see here that we become the children of God by adoption, whatever the universal Fatherhood people may say: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself;" and that this adoption is the result of predestination, and is not because of our own merits, but "according to the good pleasure of his will." Some systems of theology have much of logic, but little of God; but in Paul's teaching, it is God first, and last, and midst, and over all.

"To the praise of the glory of his grace." What a wonderful expression this is,-not only "the glory of his grace," but the praise of that glory! God has done all things with a view to magnifying his grace in the hearts of the sons and daughters of men: "wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." There seems to me to be a sacred poem in these words, "accepted in the beloved." To my heart, there is more heavenly music in those four words than in any oratorio I ever heard. "Accepted in the Beloved." Oh, what honey

this is in the mouth, what cheer this is in the heart! Are all of you, dear friends, “accepted in the beloved”?

**7, 8.** *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*

Wisdom and prudence are two of the handmaids of grace. Grace reigns through righteousness, and the wisdom and prudence of God are set to work so to conduct the whole of the arrangements that “the glory of his grace” may be all the more conspicuous.

**9.** *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

Even our knowledge of God’s will is the result of “his good pleasure.” If your eyes have been divinely opened, you see the will of God coming in everywhere, and ordering all things according to his gracious and unerring purpose.

**10.** *That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.*

All the things that are in Christ shall be gathered together; none of them shall be left out. His great covenant work shall be, in all respects, fully accomplished; there shall be no failure in any point. Whether in heaven, or on earth, the things which are in Christ shall be gathered together in One, “even in him:

**11.** *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*

How the apostle delights to harp upon this theme! The Holy Spirit knew that a time would come when men would put a slur upon this glorious truth, so he inspired his servant to set it forth as the very brightness of the sun in the spiritual firmament: “being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

**12-14.** *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is*

*the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

Twice more, in these three verses you have this expression, “to the praise of his glory,” making a third time with that which he said before, “to the praise of the glory of his grace.” The true gospel glorifies God. False gospels may have what is called “the enthusiasm of humanity” about them, but the true gospel has an enthusiasm for the living God, and it magnifies and glorifies him. Note, O believers, that you first trust in Christ, and after that you have the seal of the Spirit. There are some who look for the sealing of the Spirit before believing in Jesus; but neither God nor man will set a seal to a blank paper; there must be the writing of faith upon the heart, and then the Spirit of God comes in, with his blessed seal, and sets it at the bottom as his divine and gracious token of acceptance. The Holy Spirit is “the earnest of our inheritance.” Now, an earnest is a part of the possession itself; it is not simply a pledge, it is more than that; so the Holy Ghost in our heart is heaven begun below, it is the young dawn of the everlasting day. Blessed be God, we have his spirit within us, and we rejoice in his indwelling.

**15-17.** *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*

You do know him, for he has saved you; now go on to know a great deal more of him. You can scarcely have a better gift than this, “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” The knowledge of Christ crucified is the most excellent of all the sciences. It is better to be well acquainted with Christ than to be a very Solomon concerning all other things, yet not to know him.

**18.** *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;*

You have eyes; God’s grace has given them to you; but they are capable of additional power and force; and there is the telescope of faith, which you are allowed to use, which will enable you to see much more than you have ever seen as yet.

**18.** *That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,-*

First, you are to know what your inheritance is; that is “the hope of his calling;” and, next, you are to know what Christ’s inheritance in you is, which is another thing. It is a most blessed subject for meditation that you are Christ’s, altogether Christ’s, and that all you are to be, will be Christ’s, and that in you, poor creatures though you are, he will yet have a rich inheritance. Paul would have you know what are “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,”

**19.** *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe,*

It takes a great deal of grace to make a believer, and to keep a believer; nothing but the almighty power of God can do it.

**19, 20.** *According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,-*

Not only raising him from the dead, but lifting him up to his own right hand, and setting him there, “in the heavenly places,”

**21.** *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

The power of God, which works in a believer, is the same power with which he raised Christ from the dead, and set him in this preeminent place.

**22.** *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*

This power is also to be seen working in you who believe in Jesus. What wonders of grace we shall be when God has exerted that stupendous and amazing energy, in each one of us, even as in his own Son! What an inheritance Christ will have in us then!

**23.** *Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

Said I not truly to you that this blessed Book is full of truth put into as few words as possible? Verily, there is none like it. Other books, at the best, are like gold hammered out very thin; but here you have ingots of solid spiritual wealth, priceless in value. God help us all to make them our own treasure, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

## EPHESIANS 1

**1-2.** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

That is a sort of crossing of the Jordan to go into the land and get grace and peace. Grace changes us, peace quiets us, and then we are over Jordan.

**3.** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

They are all yours. He has not blessed you with a part of the blessings, but with all of them, they are all yours. Have you the courage and the faith to take possession of them? That is the point. If you have grace and peace you are in the land. Now let your foot rest first on one blessing and then on another and appropriate them all to yourself.

**4.** *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

What an inheritance! To be made holy. Oh, that we might be perfected as our Father which is in heaven is perfect, sanctified through and through. We are elected to this end: it is the very object of the divine choice that we may be without blame before him in love.

**5-6.** *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

See how Paul goes on taking one city after another of this heavenly Canaan. It was election, now it is adoption, now it is acceptance in the Beloved. He is a good Joshua for us if we will but really and truly follow him, and take possession of the promised land.

**7-10.** *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made*

*known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

Oh, what a wonderful gathering that will be when all the things in Christ shall be gathered together, no division among the people of God, when the whole redeemed inheritance shall be one, and we shall as one body possess it for ever. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." Got it. God has given it to us, we have a right to it, we are the heirs of it in Christ.

**11.** *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

He not only wills it, but he works it. When he wills to give his people a broad inheritance, of that large inheritance they shall certainly have, for he "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

**12-14.** *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance unto the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

You have got the Holy Spirit. He is God's seal upon you that you are indeed saved men and women. In getting that you have already received the earnest, that is, a part of the inheritance never to be taken back. A pledge has to be restored, but an earnest is kept for ever: the Spirit of God is ours, and in having him we have all things.

**15, 16.** *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*

Having got so much, you might get a great deal more.

**17, 18.** *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being*

*enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*

That is a wonderful passage; we are not only to know our inheritance in God, but God's inheritance in us. Wonderful thing, and yet it is so. The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. Joshua gave each one of the people his own portion, but all the people were God's portion. And today God delights in his people, he finds a solace in those whom he chose, in those whom he redeemed by blood, in those whom he brought near into daily fellowship with himself.

**19-23.** *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly palace, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 136., AND EPHESIANS 1

## **EPHESIANS 1**

**1.** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,*

He was not made an apostle by man, neither did he take the office upon himself, but he was made an apostle by the will of God.

**1.** *To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:*

The saints in Ephesus, the saints where they cried, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," had to bear an earnest witness against idolatry. And, dear friends, today saints in London will not have a very easy time of it if they are faithful to their Lord, for there is much to protest against in this evil generation; but as there were holy ones in Ephesus, God grant that there may be many such in London.

**2.** *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul would have us peaceful, restful, quiet. That peace must be based upon grace, He does not pray that we may have peace apart from grace, but “Grace be to you, and peace.”

**3, 4.** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,*

The high mystery of election is taught in the Word of God, but some are afraid to speak of it. Not so our Apostle. He brings it out very clearly and distinctly, and so should we, only taking care to keep it in the proportion of other doctrines.

**4, 5.** *That we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*

You hear much about the free will of man, hear a little about the free will of God. You would think, from the talk of some, that God was man’s debtor and must needs do according to the will of man. But it is not so. He is a sovereign, and gives his grace where he chooses, and he would have us know that it is according to the good pleasure of his will.

**6.** *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

Are there four words in any language which contain choicer meaning than these, “Accepted in the Beloved”? Oh! if you can say that, if you can feel it to be true, you are among the happiest of men and women. “Accepted in the Beloved.” You can never be accepted apart from Christ, the Father’s best Beloved. But there is merit enough in him to overflow and cover all our sins, and we are accepted in the Beloved.

**7.** *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace:*

Notice how the Apostle keeps on insisting that we have everything in Christ. He says, times out of number, “in him,” “in Christ.” We have redemption. We are free. We are under bonds no longer. What is the price? “Through his blood.” What is the result? “Forgiveness of sins.” What is the measure of our liberty? “According to the riches of his grace.”

**8.** *Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*

Not drowning us with floods of his grace, but handing it out to us as we are able to take it. The riches of his grace we have, but he uses wisdom and prudence, teaching us little by little as we are able to bear it, and raising us up by degrees from one stage of grace to another, according as our poor frames can endure the joy.

**9, 10.** *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

There are things in Christ in heaven: there the things in Christ on earth; but all the things in Christ shall be gathered together. All the redeemed shall come as one great host to bow before the throne of the infinite Majesty.

**11.** *In whom also*

Notice those words.

**11.** *We have obtained an inheritance,*

We have got the inheritance. Even now we have entered upon possession of the kingdom of grace.

**11, 12.** *Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

The first saints led the way in the front of the army, and they are to the praise of God's glory to this day. We thank God for the apostles and martyrs who went before us. We will follow them as they followed Christ.

**13.** *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*

After faith, the Holy Spirit is given to dwell in the soul. That is the seal. It is not that the Holy Spirit brings a seal with him. He is the seal. Where he dwells, he is the seal of God's love to that man.

**14.** *Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

The Holy Ghost is first the seal, and next the earnest. We all know what an earnest is. It is different from a pledge. A pledge is given, and then it is taken back again when the stipulation is carried out, but an earnest is part of what is to be received ultimately. The man who receives an earnest of his wage gets a few shillings, say, on Thursday, instead of taking all on Saturday. He never returns that. It is a part of his wage. And so the Holy Ghost is a part of him. When we have got him, we have got Christ.

“Thou art the earnest of his love,  
The pledge of joys to come;  
And thy soft wings, Celestial Dove,  
Shall safe convey me home.”

**15, 16.** *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*

Is that the way that we pray? Do we make mention of people in our prayers? It is well to do so. It is a good plan to keep a list of persons for whom we ought to pray, and to put it before us when we draw near to God, and go over the names. I knew one man of God who has kept a debtor and creditor list with God for many years. He puts his requests down in the book, and when they are answered he writes that down. If they are not answered he repeats them. It is a very wonderful book. I think that he told me that there is a name down there of a person for whom he has prayed, and that he is not converted yet. Out of several for whom he began to pray, he is the only one who is not converted, and is the only one that is left alive. The others were brought to Christ, and died in the faith, and he, not yet brought to Christ, still lives. He prays on with as great a confidence of the conversion of that man as I have that Christmas will come in due time. I wish that we did business with God in some such fashion as that, but our prayers are shadowy, unreal. God teach us how to pray!

**17, 18.** *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling,*

You see he gave thanks to God for their faith and for their love. But there are three divine sisters that must never be separated —

faith, hope, and love, and so the Apostle prays, “that ye may know what is the hope of his calling.”

**18-21.** *And what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to he working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

See how high Christ is raised! The same power that brought Christ from the dead, and set him on high, works in the salvation of every believer. Nothing less than omnipotence can save a soul; and omnipotence at its very best in the glorification of Christ is none too great for the salvation of a sinner.

**22, 23.** *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

May God bless to us the reading of that chapter.

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 CORINTHIANS 13; EPHESIANS 1.

## **EPHESIANS 1:1-14**

In this chapter, we see what Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has to say about the possessions and privileges of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**1, 2.** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Brethren and sisters in Christ, this is a benediction for you as well as for the saints at Ephesus; it is for all “the faithful in Christ Jesus.” May you all have grace without measure, and may you all have “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,” to “keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”! Grace and peace are both to be had by believing in Jesus.

**3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:***

It is right that we should bless God as he has so richly blessed us. Blessed be the Heavenly Father who has so abundantly blessed his children. How has he blessed us? “With all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (or, things) in Christ.”

**4. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,***

That is the commencement of all the blessing, God’s electing love. This is the fountain from which the living waters flow. There would have been no stream of blessing to us at all if it had not been for this first primeval choice of us by God, even as Jesus said to his disciples, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.”

**4. *That we should be holy and without blame before him in love:***

Here is the blessing of sanctification; we are chosen that we may be made holy. To what nobler end could we have been elected? Is not this the very highest of our heart’s desires, — “that we should be holy and without blame before him in love”?

**5. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,***

Oh, what a blessing this is, altogether inconceivable in its results!

“Behold what wondrous grace,  
The Father hath bestow’d  
On sinners of a mortal race,  
To call them sons of God!”

**6. *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.***

There is music for you: “accepted in the Beloved.” Are there grander words in any language than those four? Oh, the joy of being beloved, adopted, accepted by God the Father because of his beloved Son! Now comes something more: —

**7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;***

Redemption from destruction, the forgiveness of our sins, — we have all this through “the riches of his grace.”

**8-14.** *Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

There is no end to the blessing which God gives to his chosen. He is always blessing us with blessings upon blessings, grace upon grace, and then there will be glory to crown it all. Blessed be his holy name forever and ever.

## **EPHESIANS 2**

### **1. *And you he hath quickened.***

Is it so? Could the apostle say that to you, and to me?

### **1. *Who were dead in trespasses and sins;***

Look back to what you used to be, to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged: “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

### **2. *Wherein in time past ye walked***

With a terrible activity of spiritual death;

### **2. *According to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:***

He makes them to be his forge. There he blows his coals, there he fabricates his instruments. Do you not hear the noise of the infernal bellows when “the children of disobedience:” swear, and use unclean language? Ah, such were some of us; but we are cleansed! The evil spirit has been driven out, and he no more works in us.

**3.** *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

You that now commune with God at the mercy-seat, you that are now his favored children, and have received power to become the sons of God, you were once heirs of wrath: "By nature the children of wrath, even as others." Holy Scripture is not complimentary to unrenewed human nature. You may search it through and through to find a single flattering word to unregenerate man; but you will search in vain. This style of speech is left to those who scout divine inspiration. They draw their inspiration from another fount, from a desire to walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air. They can use flattering speeches in addressing the ungodly; but the Holy Ghost never does.

**4.** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins,*

God loved us even when we were dead in sins. His love does not depend upon what we are; it flows from his own heart. It is not love of something good in us; it is love of us because of everything good in him. Here you see the greatness of his grace, in that "he loved us, even when we were dead in sins."

**5.** *Hath quickened us together with Christ,*

Ah! That accounts for everything: "together with Christ." When we get "together with Christ", then are we made alive, then are we saved. Are you, my dear hearers, "quickened together with Christ"?

**5-7.** *(By grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

See how Paul's language grows and swells and rises as he proceeds! Just now, we read of "God, who is rich in mercy"; now the apostle speaks of "the exceeding riches of his grace", exceeding expression, exceeding comprehension, exceeding even sin itself, though that is all but infinite. "The exceeding riches of his grace" are infinity itself; but they all come to us "through Christ Jesus." Paul will speak of nothing good except that which comes "through Christ Jesus." This is the one conduit-pipe through which the

streams of living water flow to the dead in sin; God's grace comes to us "Through Christ Jesus", and through him alone.

**8.** *For by grace are ye saved through faith;*

We have this expression, "by grace are ye saved," twice over in this chapter. Paul knew that he needed to repeat himself, or people would forget what he taught. At bottom, all the wanderings from the faith at the present day amount to this, salvation by works instead of salvation by grace. The battle of the Reformation has to be fought over again. Men are justified by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. All the enmity of natural men is against that truth. They want to be saved by their own morality, and all sorts of things that they put instead of salvation by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**8, 9.** *And that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.*

"Oh!" said one to me just now, "the man who is saved by his own righteousness cannot do much in the line of praising." "No, my dear brother," I replied, "except he praises himself; and he can generally do that pretty well." Your self-made man usually worships his creator very earnestly; and your self-saved man glorifies him that saved him.

**10.** *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus*

Nothing without Christ Jesus, you see. The mark of the pierced hand is on everything: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus."

**10.** *Unto Good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

God has decreed that he will have a holy people. This is his purpose, his ordinance, to which he will always stand. He will make it good. He will make sinful people holy, and disobedient people obedient to the faith.

**11.** *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;*

Remember what you were. You were not the chosen Israelites, you have not the covenant mark in your flesh.

**12.** *That at that time ye were without Christ,*

Which is the worst state of all, far worse than being without circumcision.

**12. *Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,***

Outsiders, rank outsiders, far away from any rights, or any participation in the rights of God's children.

**12. *And strangers from the covenants of promise,***

Utter strangers to the covenants made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**12. *Having no hope, and without God in the world:***

It is an awful description, but a truthful description, of what we were.

**13. *But now***

The apostle has turned over a new leaf in the book of our history: "but now." Oh, what a change from the past to the present! "But now" —

**13. *In Christ Jesus***

See how Paul keeps harping on that one string. Note how he links us with Christ Jesus. There is nothing for us without Christ and his cross.

**13. *Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.***

Paul can never have too much of Christ. It is Christ, Christ, Christ, Christ; like the harp of Anacreon. He wished to sing of Cadmus; but his harp resounded love alone; and so the harp of Paul resounds with Christ alone, Christ alone. He always comes back to that theme. It was said of one eminent commentator that he could not find Christ in the Scripture where he was; but it was said of Cocceius that he found Christ where he was not. I would rather find Christ where he is not, than not to find him where he is. There are plenty who err in that second direction nowadays.

**14. *For he is our peace,***

Paul cannot do without Christ, you see. He will bring him in everywhere.

**14. *Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;***

There is no longer the division between Jews and Gentiles.

**15. *Having abolished in his flesh.***

See, it is always Christ, his flesh, his blood, his life. There must always be something about him: “Having abolished in his flesh.”

**15. *The enmity, even the law of commandments containeth in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he***

I cannot help reminding you, that you must not overlook the fact that Paul will not go a hair’s breadth away from Christ.

**16-18. *Might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.***

There is the whole Trinity in that one verse, Christ, the Spirit, the Father. It needs the Trinity to make a Christian, and when you have got a Christian, it needs the Trinity to make a prayer. You cannot pray a single prayer aright without Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

**19. *Now therefore***

Another of Paul’s blessed “nows.” It was “but now” a little while ago; now he has another “now.” “Now therefore” —

**19. *Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;***

You are not only in the kingdom, but you are in the royal household, which is better still. You are princes of the blood imperial. You are peers of the court of heaven: “and the household of God.”

**20. *And are built***

You are not loose stones; you are built —

**20. *Upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom***

You see, it is always that, in him, in Christ: “in whom” —

**21. *All the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:***

There is no church without Christ, no temple without him as its cornerstone, its priest, its glory.

*22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

And all this hangs upon that first sentence, “You hath he quickened.” Is it so, beloved? If you are spiritually dead, nothing here belongs to you; but if he hath quickened you, you may take every single sentence of the chapter, and say, “That is mine, and glory be the grace of God!”

## **EPHESIANS 2**

### *1. And you hath he quickened,*

You, who were by nature dead are now made alive unto God by the holy Spirit. If you had nothing else to think of, all day long, but just these five words, they might suffice to lift you up to the very heights of grateful adoration of your quickening Lord: “And you hath he quickened,”-

### *1. Who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

These were your grave clothes, or the charnel-house in which you would have continued to lie if the quickening power of God the Holy Spirit had not brought you out into newness of life.

### *2. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

This is what happened to us all in our unregenerate state, we were carried along by the world, loving what it loved, judging from its views, and acting according to its maxims. Nay, worse than that, the devil himself had dominion over us, as he had over the rest of the world; “the prince of the power of the air” was the spirit that worked in us as well as in the rest of “the children of disobedience.” What a glorious deliverance it was to be saved from the power of death, and the dominion of Satan, and to be made partakers of everlasting life!

### *3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

That is the highest point to which human nature can attain; left to itself, it makes us “children of wrath.” Even those who are now most assuredly the children of God were once the children of wrath;

there was no difference, in that respect, between them and the rest of mankind. It is only the marvelous mercy and grace of God which have made us to differ from our fellow-creatures who are still “dead in trespasses and sins.”

**4, 5.** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,--*

Again let us praise the Lord with all our hearts for what he has done for us. It is truly wonderful that he should have loved us when we were “dead in trespasses and sins,”-with no feeling, no holy desire, no repentance; while indifference, heartlessness, powerlessness, covered everything. We were dead in sin, yet he loved us, and therefore it was that he “quickened us together with Christ,”-

**5.** *(By grace ye are saved.)*

Not by human merit, not by the energy of our own will; but, “by grace ye are saved.”

**6.** *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*

We are not only alive, you see, but we are elevated into the highest position of the new life,-made to live with Christ, and in Christ,-made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

**7,8.** *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

Both the salvation and the faith that makes it ours are the gift of God.

Twice over, the apostle tells us that we are saved by grace, yet men will not believe it. They will, somehow or other, get away from this humbling but true and precious doctrine. They will contrive, by some method or other, to squeeze in their own works, and their own will, and so rob Christ, if not of his crown, yet of some of its brightest jewels.

**9, 10.** *Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship,--*

If we have good works, as I trust we have, yet even they are the production of God's grace; praise and glory for them belong to him, and not to us: "For we are his workmanship,"-

**10.** *Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

This is the great object of our election; we are elected that we may be holy, and ordained that we may walk in good works;-who can rightly quarrel with such a divine purpose as this?

**11, 12.** *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

That is the condition of every unbeliever at this time: "having no hope, and without God in the world." Mr. Hume once made the remark that he knew many Christians who were afraid to die, but he was not. The Christian man, to whom he said this, pointed to an ox grazing in the meadow, and said, "You have reached about as high as that bullock has, for he also is not afraid to die; but pray, Mr. Hume," enquired the good man, "have you any hope after death?" At that question, the philosopher shook his head, for he knew nothing of such a hope as that; the utmost point he could reach was, by indifference, to raise himself above fear. "Having no hope," is a true description of every man who has no faith in our crucified and risen Saviour.

**13.** *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

That is the great attracting power, which draws us from our natural distance, and brings us into nearness to God. How we ought to prize that precious blood which does so much for us! It cleanses us from sin; it pleads for us before the throne; and here, you see, having made a way of access for us, it also conducts us along that way, and brings us nigh to God.

**14.** *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

There are no privileges now for the Jew from which the Christian is shut out, for Christ “hath made both one.” There is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision now, for all believers are one in Christ Jesus.

**15-22.** *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

May we realize that the Holy Spirit is inhabiting his own Church at this moment; and, especially, may all of us, who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, realize Our own position in that spiritual temple which is the “habitation of God through the Spirit,” for Christ’s sake! Amen.

## **EPHESIANS 2**

**1.** *And you hath he quickened,*

Is it so? Can anyone lay his hand on your shoulder, and say right into your ear, “You hath he quickened”? If so, why this deadness of spirit? Why this worldliness? Why these wanderings? “You hath he quickened,”

**1, 2.** *Who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, —*

You were dead to all that was good, but you were alive enough to that which was evil. It seems, from this passage, that dead men walk, yet not in the way of God, but “according to the course of this world,” —

**2, 3.** *According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of all disobedience: among whom also*

*we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and we were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

We were not in the least better, by nature, than the very worst of men; and if we were any better in practice, it was only because we were restrained by providence and by grace from going into gross sin, as others did. Look unto the hole of the pit whence ye were digged, and see how humble was your origin. If you are proud of your fine feathers, as the peacock is, remember his black legs; see whence you came, and recollect the sin from which you were delivered. Bless God for your deliverance, and be humble as you think of the grace that has caused you to differ from others.

**4, 5.** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

This is a wondrous truth, that God loves the sinner even while he is dead in sin. This love is not caused by any goodness in him, for he is dead, he is wrapped up in the cerements of his sins. There is nothing lovable about him; yet God, “for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.”

**6-8.** *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*

That great truth was put, in the 5<sup>th</sup> verse, into a parenthesis. Why did Paul write it twice? Because we cannot too often be reminded that we were saved by grace. It is a truth which we so soon forget that we had need to have it rung in our ears as by a peal of bells, “By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

**9.** *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

God cannot endure boasting, and one great object of the plan of salvation by grace is to extinguish boasting, to shut it out. It is intolerable to God, he cannot endure it.

**10.** *For we are his workmanship,*

If we have anything good in us, it was all made by him.

**10-12.** *Created in Christ Jesus unto good work, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

That is a true description of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, who were certainly heathen of the heathen, the wildest and most savage of men when Paul wrote this Epistle; and yet, by sovereign grace, we have been brought to the very forefront of the nations of the earth, and we are no longer without God, nor yet without hope, nor yet without Christ, neither are we now strangers to the covenants of promise, nor aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.

**13-22.** *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were high. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

Happy are the people who enjoy these high privileges.

## **EPHESIANS 2**

**1.** *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

Then you owe your very life to him. You were dead, you were like a corrupt carcass, but his life has been breathed into you. “You hath he quickened.” Then you are no longer dead, you are a living soul before the living God, and as you owe this to him, praise him with all the life you have. You “were dead in trespasses and sins;”

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**2, 3.** *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

It does us good to remember what we used to be. There was no reason in us, by nature, why we should be made the children of God. There were in us no distinguishing traits of character by which we were separated from our fellowsinners. We ran in the same course; we were possessed by the same spirit, we wrought the same works; we had the same nature, we were under the same condemnation: “children of wrath, even as others.”

**4, 5.** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

“By grace ye are saved.” I know that you feel that it is so. Our quickening out of our death in sin must have been by grace; and as God has done it, unto him must be ascribed all the glory of it. There can be no merit in those who are dead in sin that they should be quickened out of their sin; this must be the work of the Lord alone, and unto him be all the praise. He “hath quickened us together with Christ,” so that our life is mystically linked with the life of Christ, as he said to his disciples, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” Until he can die, those who are one with him cannot die.

**6.** *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly place, in Christ Jesus:*

It is all in him, and it has a sevenfold sweetness about it because it is in him. To live unto God is a wondrous mercy, but to live together with Christ is an unspeakable honour. To be raised up into the heavenly places would be a surpassing blessing, but to be raised up there together with Christ, and to be made to sit there with him,

is a boon that is above the superlative; I know not how else to speak of it.

**7, 8.** *That in the age to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; —*

It must be all of grace because of the greatness of the favor bestowed. A man dead in trespasses and sins cannot deserve to be made alive; and when he is made alive, he cannot deserve to be raised up to sit with Christ in the heavenly places. That is too great a boon to come to us by the way of the law; it must come to us emphatically as the gift of the grace of God in Christ Jesus: “For by grace are ye saved through faith;” —

**8.** *And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

“Not of yourselves.” What do those people mean who keep on crying up the power of the human will, the wonderful dignity of human nature, and all that kind of foolish talk? Salvation is not in ourselves; “it is the gift of God,” not a reward which we have earned, but a free gift which God bestows according to the riches of his grace.

**9.** *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

God will not have a boaster in heaven. He will not have the creature exalting himself in his presence. The command, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;” is backed up by this reason, “for I am God, and there is none else.” Therefore unto God himself must be the praise and glory for all who are saved.

**10.** *For we are his workmanship,*

Salvation cannot be of works, for if we have any good works, it is because we are God’s workmanship.

**10-12.** *Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made hands; that at that time ye were without Christ,*

Certainly we were poor sinners of the Gentiles, having no participation whatever in the old Mosaic dispensation.

**12.** *Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,--*

For us there was no paschal lamb, for us there was no high priest at Jerusalem, no altar smoked with a sacrifice for us, we were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,” —

**12.** *And strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

That is where the whole Gentile world stood, and this is experimentally where you and I stood till sovereign grace interposed for our salvation. What knew we about the covenants of promise? We knew nothing, and we did not care to know anything. What did we know about a hope? We should have died without a hope if God’s mercy had not come to us. What knew we, or what cared we about a God in the world? We may have thought that there was a God in heaven; but as actually operating upon the daily life of man, we knew no such God. We were “without God in the world:”

**13.** *But now —*

Oh, what a blessed “but”! How much hangs upon it! Think of what God has done for you by his grace: “But now” —

**13.** *In Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

What a power there must be about that blood, that God not only hears it speaking in heaven, that it makes a way of access for all the saints, that it cleanses from all sin, but that it brings the far-off ones nigh! We will never cease to speak of the precious blood of Jesus. There are certain people who cannot bear to hear it mentioned; but a bloodless theology is a lifeless theology, and a ministry that can do without mentioning the blood of Christ has no power to bless the sons and daughters of men.

**14.** *For he is our peace,*

Peace with God, peace with our own conscience, peace with all mankind we find in Christ.

**14.** *Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

So making Jews and Gentiles one;

**15.** *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

Our Lord Jesus Christ was a Jew, yet I venture to say that there was nothing Jewish about him. He was the model of what man ought to have been, and his words and his actions made him worthy to be called cosmopolitan. He belongs to all mankind. He is the man in whom all races are summed up, and when we come to Christ, there is a link between us and the ancient people of God. I do not care about Anglo-Israelism, what I care for is Christo-Israelism, — to belong to the Israel of God in Christ Jesus.

**16-17.** *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

Christ is the Preacher of peace as well as the Maker of peace, and no man ever knows the peace of God unless Christ preaches it to him.

**18, 19.** *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore —*

Here is another sweet “now.”

**19.** *Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

A part of the family of the great Householder, even God. Citizenship is well enough in its place, but citizens do not always know one another. But we are of the household of God, we are brought into an intimate relationship with one another through our Elder Brother who makes us to be the children of the great Father in heaven.

**20, 21.** *And are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

We are put so close together, if we are really in Christ, that we are like the stones of the temple, so united as to become one. In Christ Jesus, our union is not only that of relationship, but we enter into a perfect unity with one another and with the Lord.

**22.** *In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

That is the most wonderful truth of all, — that God himself should come and dwell among his people and in his people, and

that, being sanctified by grace, we become the dwelling place of the Most High. God grant that it may be so! Amen.

## **EPHESIANS 2**

**1.** *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

What a great change, then, has taken place in the people of God! It is described as being similar to the resurrection of the dead. And do you suppose that this took place without a man's knowing it? Do you think that we are wrong in stating a wide difference between the quickened ones and the dead? I trow not. In fact, those addresses made to congregations in which there is no distinction made between the living and the dead in Zion, are deceptive. And prayers that are meant to suit congregations of mingled character, where some are dead in sin, and others alive unto God, are, on the very face of them, an attempt at an impossibility. As great as is the distinction between the dead in their graves and living men that walk the streets, so great is the difference between the regenerate and unregenerate. Do you think that in reading this verse, dear friends you could apply it to yourself, "and you, and you, and you, hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin"?

**2.** *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

Those who are not saved have a life of evil. They are dead towards, God, but they are alive towards Satan. An unregenerate man's heart is Satan's workshop, in which he forges divers devices of evil — the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.

**3.** *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

No difference by nature between the brightest saint in the church of God and the blackest sinner of the camp of Satan all fallen, all desperately depraved as our very original. What wonders of grace are those who are saved! Let them take care that they never fail in praising that grace.

**4-7.** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

God's great object is to display his grace — to let all the universe know what a gracious God he is, therefore, did he pitch upon us who were dead in sin, even as others; therefore, does he quicken us; and therefore, having quickened us, does he go on to raise us up from one point to another until he makes us sit with Christ upon his throne. Oh! beloved, if all the ages are to learn the grace of God from his dealings towards us, let us learn it, and let us talk much of it, and exult much in it. Who is a gracious God like unto our God?

**8.** *For by grace are ye saved*

Not by your own merits, not by priestcraft, not by your own free will. "By grace are ye saved." This is the great summary of the gospel. Let this doctrine be preached, and we shall soon see the errors of Rome fly before it. "By grace are ye saved."

**8.** *Through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

Neither the faith nor the salvation are of ourselves. They are both the gifts of divine love, both wrought in us by the divine spirit. It is the gift of God.

**9, 10.** *Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship,*

No good man can boast of his works, because those works are the work of God. Without him we could not perform good works, so that even when we possess them, we are his workmanship. Shall the vessel on the wheel exalt itself as if it made itself? No, the potter must have the credit of all the skill of the making of the vessel, and if, therefore, there shall be in our character marks and lines of grace and truth, unto God be the glory of them, for we are his workmanship.

**10-12.** *Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called*

*Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at the time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

This is where our fathers were. This is where we are by nature. We have not got even as far as the Jew, who had a covenant, according to the flesh to plead and had received the sign of it while yet a child; but we — we were altogether foreigners and aliens from the Most High.

**13.** *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

Oh! rejoice in this. Ye far-off ones made nigh, lift up your hearts now in thankfulness for what the Lord Jesus has done for you by his blood — made nigh by the blood of Christ.

**14.** *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

Christ is peace between Jew and Gentile — peace between both of them and their God. I have heard of a poor bricklayer, who, when at work on a scaffold, fell from a great height and was taken up and was dying. They sent for a minister of the gospel, who began addressing him in such terms as this, “My dear man, you are evidently near to die, and therefore, I exhort you to make your peace with God.” He knew but very little of it, compared with what the poor bricklayer knew, for, opening his eyes, he said, “Make my peace with God, sir? That I could not do, but, I thank God, it was made for me in the everlasting covenant of grace in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ eighteen hundred years ago, and I have no peace to make.” It is peace already made, and we have but to accept it, for he is our peace who hath made both one and broken down the middle wall of partition between us.

**15,16.** *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*

No enmity now should exist between Jew and Gentile. None does exist between the believer and his God. The enmity is dead for ever, for Christ hath died.

**17, 18.** *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

In this verse you have the whole Trinity, and all the Trinity in unity are necessary for prayer. "Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

**19.** *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

How blessedly grace annihilates all national distinction. Cowper spoke of nations which, like kindred drops, would have melted into one if they had not been divided by a range of mountains or intersected by a narrower faith. But in the gospel of grace we do melt into one. Who loves the Lord is a co-patriot with all who love him. Distinctions of nationality sweetly sink when we come to know the Saviour. We are fellowcitizens with the saints and of the household of God.

This exposition consisted of readings from EPHESIANS 2. MATTHEW 11:1-6.

## **EPHESIANS 2**

**1.** *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:*

These were your grave clothes. You were wrapped up in them. Nay, this was your sarcophagus. You were shut up in it, as in a great stone coffin: "Dead in trespasses and sins."

**2.** *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*

You were once no better than the workshop of the devil. He is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, as the smith works in his forge. When you hear foul language, when you see bad actions, these are the sparks coming out of the chimney that let you know who is at work within, down below. What a dreadful thing it is — a man dead to all that is good, but alive through the indwelling of the devil that is within him. "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

**3.** *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

Not children of God, even as some profanely assert when they talk about the universal fatherhood of God. Ye were children of wrath, even as others. And the best of men were no better than others by nature. They were as dead, as much under the influence of Satan, as much under the influence of the lusts of the flesh as others are who are left where they are. It is only sovereign grace that makes us to differ. "Were by nature," not by error; by nature, not by a mistake, not by a few actions, but by nature, the children of wrath, even as others. See what you used to be. Let this make you humble. See what you would have been. Let this make you grateful. "You hath he quickened." He has put life into you. He has made you quit your graves. He has made you come from under the dominion of Satan and the devices of your own heart. Will you not bless his name tonight?

**4, 5.** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,*

Wonder! The life that quickens. Christ quickens all the members of his mystical body, and this has come to us through the riches of God's mercy. Whatever God has, he has in abundance, but of his mercy we read that he has riches of it; and truly all those riches of mercy he has shown in our case. We cannot but have riches of gratitude for such riches of mercy.

**5.** *(By grace ye are saved;)*

See, Paul puts that in a parenthesis. It was not necessary to the sense, but he knew that there would come a time when men would not like this doctrine, so he puts it in, "by grace are ye saved." They cannot bear it, and therefore they shall have it. They shall have it when the sense does not seem to demand it. To make it quite clear, he will insert it, "by grace ye are saved."

**6.** *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

We are not only raised from the dead with Christ, but we are spiritually raised into the heavenly places with him. It is a great thing when a man learns to look up from earth to heaven. It is a

greater thing when he learns to look down from heaven upon earth — to have you sitting at the right hand of God, and then to look down on all the things of this present life as far below you.

*7. That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

Brethren, we are to be a show, an exhibition case, in which God will exhibit the riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Angels will count it a high joy to study the life of a regenerate man, to see him rise from death in sin to the glory of God in Christ Jesus. What is so precious in God's esteem ought to excite our praise continually.

*8. For by grace are ye saved*

There it is again. Paul rings that silver bell in the deaf ears of men. "By grace are ye saved."

*8, 9. Through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

We should be sure to boast if we could. We are a boasting people. Man is a poor mass of flesh, and he is largely given to the corruption of pride, He will boast if he can.

*10. For we are his workmanship,*

If there is any good thing in us, he put it there. It is not for us to boast. It is for him to boast if he pleases.

*10, 11. Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember,*

Oh! that is a good word for us, "Remember," we are so apt to forget. "Remember."

*11, 12. That ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ,*

Had you to do with Christ? The Jews call you uncircumcised dogs. What had you to do with the Messiah? Was not the Messiah for God's Israel? You did not belong to Israel.

*12. Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,*

The covenant was in Isaac. You are not the children of Isaac. You are not descended from Abraham. You were strangers from the covenants of promise.

**12.** *Having no hope,*  
Either here or hereafter.

**12, 13.** *And without God in the world:*  
But now Oh! what a contrast.

**13.** *In Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

You are brought near to Israel. You are brought nearer still to Israel's God. Now you are not aliens. You are not strangers from the covenant. You have a hope, you have a God.

**14, 15.** *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

There is no circumcision and uncircumcision now, for that is done away with. There is no Israel according to the flesh now, and Gentiles who are not of God, for there is a spiritual Israel, to which we belong, as well as those of Abraham's race. He has swept out of the way all the ordinances which divided us, and we are now one in him.

**16, 17.** *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

To the Gentile and to the Jew, to the atrociously wicked, and to those who were religious after a fashion — he has brought them both in by the cross.

**18.** *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

Here you have the Trinity in a single line of Scripture, and it needs the Trinity to make an acceptable prayer. Through him (that is, Christ) we have access by one Spirit unto the Father, and now, today, the Church of God is one in prayer, whether Jew or Gentile. We come to God by the same Mediator, helped by the same Spirit. We have answers of peace from the same Father.

**19.** *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints and of the household of God:*

There are many here whom we do not know. We have not seen their faces before, but if they are in Christ and we are in Christ, we are very near of kin. There is an old proverb that blood is thicker than water, and depend upon it that when there is the blood of Christ sprinkled upon us, it makes very near kinship. When we are bought with the same price, quickened by the same life, and are on the way to the same heaven, we are very near of kin. We are no mere strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints and all the household of God. They make a great fuss when they give a man the liberty of the City of London. There is a fine gold box to put it in. You have got the liberty of the new Jerusalem, and your faith, like a golden box, holds the deeds of your freemanship. Take care of them, and rejoice in them.

**20, 21.** *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

The church is a framed house. It has an architect. Some seem to think that it is a load of bricks. They have no church officers. There are none set apart to this work, and none to the other. It seems to be just a heap of stones thrown down anyhow. But a true church is, by the Spirit of God, a building fitly framed together. One is a door, another is a window. One lies low and hidden in the foundation. Another may have a more prominent position in the wall; and it should be so with us — that we should each have a place that God has appointed him, and keep to that place. Lord, build up thy Church upon earth at this time.

**22.** *In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

We are not builded to stand like a carcase. It is a ghastly sight to see houses in London nearly finished, but never occupied: but it is the glory of the Church of God that it is inhabited. It is a habitation of God through the Spirit. Holy Spirit, dwell in thy Church more evidently. Keep open house for all poor sinners that come to Christ, and glorify God.

## EPHESIANS 4

**1, 2.** *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

It is a loving call. Walk lovingly. It is the condescension of God that called you. Be, therefore, lowly. It is God in tenderness who has loved you. Be, therefore, meek, “forbearing one another in love.”

**3-6.** *Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

Therefore, strive for unity. Woe unto those who divide believers — that rob them of love to one another — that set up another gospel which is not another, or in any way detract from the unity of the body of Christ.

**7.** *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ*

It does not mean that God gives stingingly, but that he gives according to our capacity to receive. We are not all made with the same measure of capacity, because we are not all intended to do the same office; and God gives everyone of us as much grace as we are prepared to receive. The Lord enlarge our hearts that we may hold more of his grace, “according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

**8-10.** *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

Now what were the gifts he gave? He rode up to heaven in triumph. And in Roman triumphs they scattered gold and silver among the people to show the greatness of the trophies which the warriors had brought home. So Christ, when he ascended up on high, scattered gifts among the sons of men. And what were these? Why they were men, for men are God’s possession — the man Christ Jesus first, and then those whom he uses for himself afterwards.

**11-13.** *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:*

We have not come to that yet; therefore, we need instruction. We need edifying or building up, and so the Lord gives to his Church, according to his own mind and will, evangelists, pastors, and the like. Sometimes these are pastors whom God never sent; and a man may take upon himself the voice of an evangelist who was never called, and consequently is no gift of God to the churches, and is a waste of their strength. But if we have those whom God gives, we shall find a priceless gift in the bestowal of such men, upon the Church of God.

**14-16.** *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

You see then, brethren, whole we are. We are each one put into his place to do something to the entire body. No limb of the body lives to itself. It is only healthy when it ministers to the health of the whole body. We are nothing, except as we are joined to the rest of God's people, and especially joined to him who is our glorious Head.

**17-19.** *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

This, the member of the body of Christ will never do. The Head is holy, so will the members be by that Holy Spirit who sanctifies us.

**20.** *But ye have not so learned Christ;*

What a beautiful expression this is. It does not say, “Learned the doctrine of Christ,” or “the precept of Christ,” though that were a great truth, but we learn Christ himself. Our school book is Christ. The copy by which we write is Christ. The image to which we desire to be conformed is Christ. “Ye have not so learned Christ.”

**21, 22.** *If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

You have done with it. You put it off as a beggar puts off his rags when he has fresh garments given him.

**23-25.** *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.*

You know the eye will not deceive the head. There is no part of the body that will deceive the rest. If the foot perceives that there is a trap-fall, it tells the body, and it does not lead it astray. If the nostril perceives an evil smell, it tells the body, that it may escape from the noxious effluvium. The body is true to itself. So if we are members one of another lying must be abhorrent. Every thought of it in any shape, must be detestable to us.

**26.** *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

Be angry sometimes. A man that is never angry, surely has no strong convictions in him, for he that is not angry at evil can scarcely be thought to rejoice in that which is good. But anger is a dog that is very apt to bite the wrong persons; therefore, be ye angry, and sin not. Anger is like fire. Let it always be put out at night. “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,” but if it lights during the day, keep it in the grate — keep it in its proper place, for if fire takes hold where it should not, the house may be destroyed, and the man himself may perish in the fire. If you be angry, as you

sometimes must be, “be angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down on your wrath.” They say that the stings of some obnoxious creatures will not die until the sun goes down. Well, let the sting of anger die when the sun goes down. Rake out the fire when the sun is down. Do not keep it blazing all night long, ready for the morning. Let it go out, lest our anger become hatred and become malice.

**27.** *Neither give place to the devil.*

He is standing at the door. If you give him a seat, he will come in, and it is very easy to do so — to make an opportunity for the devil to come in. “Neither give place to the devil.” Idle persons, tempt the devil to depart by being busy — by being prayerful, and by being much with God. Give no place to the devil.

**28.** *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour,*  
Honest industry is the cure for dishonesty.

**28.** *Working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

What a splendid change from a thief up to one that gives to him that needeth! Now, between them, we should have put, “Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour with his hands” — a thing which is good — “that he may be able to provide things honest for himself.” A very good idea, too, but the like Christian thought is that he may labour, working with his hands that he may have to give. I wonder how many, even of professing Christians, think of this — that the object of labour should be that they may have to give. There are some who think the object is that we may have to keep — that we may have to hoard — but I say Christ, by his apostle, teaches us that we should labour that we may have to give to him that needeth.

**29.** *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,*

Putrid is the word — “no putrid communication” — no word, therefore, which tends to do harm to the purest mind — nothing which is unsavory; therefore, also, nothing that is untrue — nothing that is slanderous — nothing that would injure my neighbor. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.” “You may as well say it as think it,” says one. By no manner of means. If you think it, it will do you harm; if you say it, it will do hurt to others. You may have a bottle of poison, and it is much better to keep the

cork in, for if somebody should drink it, then they will die. No, “let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.”

**29-31.** *But that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

Why does the apostle say clamor? Why, because when people are angry they generally talk very loud, and I believe that if persons would correct their tone of voice and resolve that they will not speak above their usual tone when they feel heated and provoked, it would greatly assist to check the abolition of passion. So the apostle puts in, “Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and loud talking — all clamor and evil speaking — be put away from you with all malice.”

**32.** *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.*

This exposition consisted of readings from EPHESIANS 4. AND 6:1-15.

## EPHESIANS 4

**1.** *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you-*

Paul puts force into the argument by his manner of speaking; you can hear in his words the rattle of his chains. Here is a man who, for Christ’s sake, has lost his liberty, and who for that reason pleads with his fellow Christians: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you” —

**1.** *That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

“Do not dishonour the good cause, let not your lives bring disgrace upon Christ; if you are called Christians, be Christians.”

**2.** *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

This is the very spirit of Christianity, — to be able to bear and forbear, to be gentle, not to be selfish or self-seeking, or angry and passionate, but full of lowliness and meekness. Brethren, do not seek the highest place. If you do, you will at least have a contested election, for many want that position; but if you choose the lowest place, you, shall have it, and nobody will try to run in opposition to

you. There is always plenty of room in the lowly places, and there is peace there, and, let me whisper to you, they are really the highest places in the Church of God. If we will go down, we shall ascend; but if we are striving to be great, and to be masterful, we shall not gain the ends we are seeking, and we shall not honour our Master.

**3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

That is a living ligature which binds the members of the body together. Try to keep in one spirit, united by “the bond of peace.”

**4. There is one body,**

Christ never had two.

**4. And one Spirit,**

There never were two Holy Spirits. The one Spirit that quickened the whole Church of Christ is by himself, alone.

**4. Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;**

You have only one ground of confidence, and you have only one heaven in which you hope to meet all your fellow believers.

**5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,**

There is only one Lord in the Christian Church; and there is only one faith. There may be many forms of faith, but there is only one true faith. “One baptism.” There may be many baptisms so-called, but there can be only one that is the true baptism.

**6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

So that, if we are one in all these things, we ought to be one in a hearty affection towards one another.

**7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.**

That is, to every one of us who are members of his mystical body. The living members of the living body receive according to each one’s function and place in the body a measure of grace for the benefit of the whole.

**8-10. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)**

When he received gifts for men, and gave them to men, what did he give?

**11.** *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

Different gifts to different races.

**12.** *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

The early Church could not have been without apostles, and we cannot do without evangelists. May the Lord send many faithful men who will range over the whole country preaching the Word! Neither can we do without pastors and teachers; and it is idle to attempt to do so. Would God we had many more of the sort that Jesus gives! Those whom men make are worth nothing, but those whom Jesus gives are worth everything.

**13.** *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:*

When all Christian people shall be well developed, mature, then the whole body of Christ will come unto the stature of a perfect man. When will that be? There are some who are always looking for the perfect Church of Christ; but they have not seen it yet. When Eve was in the making, Adam did not see her; it was only when she was complete that she became visible; and today, the real Church of Christ is only in the making, and when she has been fashioned out of the side of Christ, then she will be presented to him without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. All the various agencies which God has appointed are working together for the fashioning of this perfect body of the Church. Meanwhile, it is equally true that all believers are intended to grow “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Some of them are yet in spiritual things only like children of a span long, others are but as boys and girls in the streets of Jerusalem, while some are half-developed men and women. Oh, that we could all come “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”! You know how the servants stand the recruits against a wall, and then measure them to see whether they are up to the army standard. Now stand upright, and see whether you have come” unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Alas! how very short we are! Oh, that we could grow! Spirit of God, make us more like Christ!

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

There are plenty of so-called Christians of that sort, nowadays, who are too weak to know anything for themselves. They are not settled and grounded, the last person who comes near them, and pulls their ear a little hard, turns their head his way. The next person, who will pull their ear a little harder, will turn their head another way. Be no longer children, I beseech you, brethren, but be men; know what you do know, hold it with the tenacious grip of a divinely-implanted faith, and God help you to escape from those who lie in wait to deceive!

**15, 16.** *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Every part of the body supplies something that is essential to the whole. There are certain sacs and vessels the use of which we cannot tell; even the best anatomist does not know what are their uses, but he does know that, if they are not there, health cannot be maintained, and, in some instances, life itself would expire if some vessel, quite insignificant, should be taken away. Let us believe that all God's people are essential to the completion of the body of Christ, and that all the workers and all the sufferers, too, are needed to make up the Church of which Christ is the Head.

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

That is a dreadful condition for anyone to reach; let us pray to God to save us from that terrible state of heart.

**19.** *Have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

Oh, dear friends, we must come apart from everything that is impure and unclean! May we never, by any conduct of ours, give countenance to unchastity and impurity! Christian people must be clear of these things.

**20-25.** *But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on, the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.*

They who lie in jest will find out that God puts it down as sinning in earnest. Let us never attempt to deceive. In the East, in olden times, and I might say as much of the present day, it was not usually reckoned a great sin to lie; the great evil was when the liars were found out. Oh! but the Christian man must be true in every word that he speaks, he must faithfully keep his promises, and be known to be a trustworthy, reliable man. If you are not true, Christ will not own you as belonging to him.

**26.** *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

If ever angry, be only angry with evil, and never retain anger in your heart. It must not last more than a day. They say that a wasp's sting dies at night; so, let every resentful thought die away as the sun sets.

**27.** *Neither give place to the devil.*

He will knock at your door, and try to get in; but do not offer him a chair. If he forces his company upon you, let him know he is not welcome.

**28.** *Let him that stole steal no more:*

If he has only been a petty pilferer, "Let him that stole steal no more." He that steals a pin will one day steal an ox if he can.

**28.** *But rather let him labour,*

If he must have something that he does not at present possess, this is the way to get it, not by stealing it, but by labouring for it.

**28.** *Working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

Observe that our trade must be a right one, not one that injures others: “Working with his hands the thing which is good.” But what a remarkable verse this is! A man has been a thief, and he is to go and get to work; what for? To supply his own necessities? Yes, but he is to rise to something higher than that. He is to work “that he may have to give to him that needeth.” What changes the grace of God makes in a man! He who once took from other people is taught to work that he may give to other people. This is indeed a turning of things the right side uppermost.

**29.** *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,*

Do not utter a dirty or corrupt word, nay, though it has a merry jest appended to it, do not speak it. “He pares his apple who would cleanly feed,” is a good proverb. Take away all that is corrupt about the story.

**29.** *But that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

What sweet talking there would be if we all spoke in this way, to “minister grace unto the hearers”! Ah! then, my dear friends, it would not matter how much we talked, if every word was salted with salt.

**30.** *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

The Holy Spirit’s being in you is your seal that you are the child of God, and the power by which you will be preserved till the resurrection; therefore, do not grieve that blessed Spirit.

**31, 32.** *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another,*

“Kind” is a good old Saxon word; it means kinned. Be ye kind, like men who are akin to one another; look on all men as your brothers.

**32.** *Tenderhearted, forgiving one another,*

You will have something that will need to be forgiven, and your brother will have something which you will need to forgive.

**32.** *Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

The Lord write all these words upon our hearts, for Christ's sake! Amen.

## **EPHESIANS 4**

**1.** *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,-*

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

**2.** *With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love;-“*

You are not called to hector over men, to be lords over God's heritage; you are called to be Christ-like, to be gentle and tender, ready to bear and to forgive all manner of wrong that may be done to you;”

**3.** *Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Some people seem as if they endeavored to break the unity of the Spirit, and to snap every sacred bond of love and Christian affection; be ye not like unto them, but let Christ's mind be in you; and with lowliness, and meekness, and longsuffering, endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**4-6.** *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

If there were two lords, you might be divided into two parties; if there were two faiths, you might split up into two sections; if there were two baptisms, you might be right in having two denominations; if there were two fathers, there might be two families; if there were two indwelling spirits, there would be, and

there must be, two sorts of people; but, in the true Church of Jesus Christ, there is “one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

*7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

We have not all the same form of grace, and we cannot all perform the same service for the Saviour; we differ very much from each other as to our abilities, and as to the positions which we can occupy; and our Lord intended it to be so.

**8-10.** *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive. and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

Paul could not help giving us this lesson by the way, that he that ascended was also he that first descended; and you may depend upon it that the man who will attain the highest honour in the Church of Christ is the man who descends, who lays aside all ambition, and all desire to be honoured and respected, and who is willing to be nothing. He who thus descends, shall surely ascend.

**11.** *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

Not all alike, not all apostles or prophets; and not all equals, for pastors may not be equal in rank with apostles. They are not all to do the same work, for all teachers cannot prophesy, neither does a prophet always pasteurize, and watch over a flock. Jesus Christ gave divers gifts,-

**12, 13.** *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*

Then, whatever spiritual gifts we have, they are not our own to use as we please; they are only entrusted to us that we may employ them to help our fellow-Christians. Beloved brethren and sisters, we are one with Christ, and we are one with each other; and, therefore, we must not look every man upon his own things, but also upon the things of others; and it should be a question of the first importance

to every Christian, "How can I best utilize myself for the benefit of the rest of the members of the Church?" Do not ask, "How can I benefit myself?" but let your enquiry be, "How can I be most profitable to my fellow-Christians?" I have heard some professors say of a sermon that they could not feed under it; the discourse was very likely to be useful to the unconverted, but they could not hear it because they could not feed under it. Their idea seems to be that preaching must always be a spoon used for feeding them; but it is not so. The Word of God contains much spiritual nutriment specially suitable for the lambs of the flock. These men, who are strong, want meat, so they say that they do not enjoy what they hear, it is of no use to them. But are the babes in Christ's family never to be fed? Does not humanity itself teach us that, first of all, the weakest and feeblest should be cared for? Oh, for grace to be unselfish! There is such a thing as Christian selfishness; and, of all evil things in the world, it is the most unchristian. When the first and last concern of a man is his own salvation, his own comfort, his own advancement, his own edification, and nothing besides, he needs to be saved from such a selfish spirit as that.

**14-16.** *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, 'may grow up into him in all things, which is the head even Christ: from whom the 'whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Every part of the body has its own special function; there are some secret vessels of which as yet the physiologists know very little. What may be the particular use of them has not yet been ascertained; but depend upon it, God has created no part of our body in vain; and, in like manner, in the mystical body of Christ, every Christian man has his own office, his own work, something that he can do that nobody else can do; and our great object should be to find out what that work is, and to give our whole strength to it, for the nourishing of the entire body of Christ.

**17-19.** *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their*

*mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling-*

That is a terrible expression: "past feeling"-

**19-25.** *Have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying,*

As a rotten, worn-out garment that you could not bear to wear, -

**26.** *Speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.*

Then, why should we lie one to another? Should one hand try to deceive the other hand? Should the eye mislead the foot? Surely, the union of one member with all the other members should ensure its truthfulness.

**26.** *Be ye angry, and sin not:*

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

**26.** *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

Never let it outlive the day, but forgive ere the sun goes down.

**27.** *Neither give place to the devil.*

A man who harbours malice in his heart, invites the devil to come in, and keeps a place ready for him.

**28.** *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour,-*

For laziness is generally the cause of theft. If a man would work for what he wanted, he would not be tempted to steal it. Paul carries his argument very far, "let him labour,"-

**28.** *Working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

What a rise there is here,-from a thief up to a giver to him that needeth! This is what the grace of God does. Here is a man, who used to take his neighbor's goods if he could; but, when grace transforms him, he actually gives a share of his own goods to his poor neighbor; that is a marvelous change.

**29.** *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,-*

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

**29.** *But-*

Since some communication is sure to come out of your mouth, let it be a good one,-

**29-31.** *That which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

Especially take heed of that "evil speaking" against which the apostle warns you, for there are many people who cannot live without speaking; they must talk a great deal, and they often say that which is false; they invent evil, they twist an honest action, and impute wrong motives to the doer of it. A few such persons in a community can cause much of heartache and distress; they little know what servants of Satan they may become. God help us to put away all evil speaking, and all malice!

**32.** *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

That is, very freely, very often, very abundantly, very thoroughly, very heartily: "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," so also do ye.

## EPHESIANS 5

1. *Be ye therefore followers of God,  
Or, imitators of God,-*

1. *As dear children;*

Children are naturally imitators. They are usually inclined to imitate their father; this is, therefore, a most comely and appropriate precept: “Be ye therefore imitators of God, as dear children.”

2. *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.*

What a path to walk in! “Walk in love.” What a well-paved way it is! “As Christ also hath loved us.” What a blessed Person for us to follow in that divinely royal road! It would have been hard for us to tread this way of love, if it had not been that his blessed feet marked out the track for us. We are to love as Christ also hath loved us and the question which will often solve difficulties is this, “What would Jesus Christ do in my case? What he would have done, that we may do: “Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.” And if we want to know how far that love may be carried, we need not be afraid of going too far in self-denial; we may even make a sacrifice of ourselves for love of God and men, for here is our model: “As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.”

3. *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;*

So far from ever falling under the power of these evils, do not even name them; count them sins unmentionable to holy cars. In what a position do we find “covetousness” placed, side by side with “fornication and all uncleanness”! In the Epistle to the Colossians, covetousness is called “idolatry”, as if the Holy Spirit thought so ill of this sin that he could never put it in worse company than it deserved to be in. Yet I fear it is a very common sin even amongst some who call themselves saints. God deliver us altogether from its sway, and help us to hate the very name of it!

4. *Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient but rather giving of thanks.*

All sorts of evil, frivolous, fruitless talk should be condemned by the Christian. He should feel that he lives at a nobler rate, he lives to purpose; he lives to bear fruit; and that which has no fruit about it, and out of which no good can come, is not for him. "But rather giving of thanks." Oh, for more of this giving of thanks! It should perfume the labours of the day, it should sweeten the rest of the night, this giving of thanks. We are always receiving blessings; let us never cease to give God thanks for them. If we never leave off thanking until we are beyond the need of blessing, we shall go on praising the Lord as long as we live here, and continue to do so throughout eternity.

**5.** *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath, any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

What a sweeping sentence! This is indeed a sword with two edges. Many will flinch before it; and yet, though they flinch, they will not escape, for Paul speaks neither more nor less than the truth when he declares that "no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

**6.** *Let no man deceive you with vain words for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

These are the very things God hates. If, therefore, they are in you, God cannot look upon you with the love that he feels towards his children. "These things" he cannot endure, and "because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

**8.** *Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness,*

Then, "these things" suited you.

**8.** *But now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light;*

Get clean away from these dark things; travel no more in the thick gloom of these abominations. God help you to walk in the light as he is in the light!

**9, 10.** *(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*

We ought to pray that our whole life may be "acceptable unto the Lord." We are ourselves "accepted in the Beloved;" and, that

being the case, it should be our great desire that every thought and word and deed, ay, every breathing of our life, should be “acceptable unto the Lord.”

**11,12.** *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.*

It was so with the old heathen world in which Paul lived; he could not write or speak of those abominable vices, which defiled the age. But is London any better than Ephesus? Surely, old Corinth, which became a sink of sin, was not a worse Sodom than this great modern Babylon. There is great cause to say of the wicked even to this day, “It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.”

**13.** *But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light;*

Then drag them to the light! There will be a great howling when these dogs of darkness have the light let in upon them, but it has to be done.

**13-15.** *For whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

See then that ye walk circumspectly, Not carelessly, not thinking that it is of no importance how you live; but looking all round you, “walk circumspectly,” watching lest even in seeking one good thing you spoil another. Never present to God one duty stained with the blood of another duty. “See then that ye walk circumspectly,”-

**15, 16.** *Not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time,*

Buying up the hours; they are of such value that you cannot pay too high a price for them.

**16-18.** *Because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

If you want excitement, seek this highest, holiest, happiest form of exhilaration, the divine exhilaration which the Holy Spirit alone can give you: “Be filled with the Spirit.”

**19.** *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

We should have thought that Paul would have said, “singing and making melody with your voice to the Lord;” but the apostle, guided by the Holy Ghost, overlooks the sound, which is the mere body of the praise, and looks to the heart, which is the living soul of the praise: “Making melody in your heart to the Lord,” for the Lord careth not merely for sounds, though they be the sweetest that ever came from the lip of man or angel; he looks at the heart. God is a Spirit, and he looks spiritually at our spiritual praises; therefore, let us make melody in our heart to the Lord.

**20, 21.** *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

That principle of maintaining your rights, standing up for your dignity, and so on, is not according to the mind of the Spirit. It is his will that you should rather yield your rights, and, for the sake of peace, and the profit of your brethren, give up what you might naturally claim as properly belonging to you: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

**22-30.** *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ’s is the head of the church and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands, in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,*

What a wonderful expression! To think that we, poor creatures that we are, should be thus joined to Christ by a marriage union, nay, by a vital union,-is indeed amazing. Oh, the depths of the love of Christ, that such an expression as this should be possible!

**31, 32.** *For this cause shalt a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

There is the mystery, that he should leave his Father, and quit the home above, and become one flesh with his elect, going with them, and for their sakes, through poverty, and pain, and shame, and death. This is a marvel and a mystery indeed.

**33.** *Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

Thus the Spirit of God follows us to our homes, and teaches us how to live to the glory of God. May he help us so to do, for Christ's sake! Amen.

### **EPHESIANS 6:1-15**

**1.** *Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*

Fitting by nature, and pleasing in the sight of God.

**2-4.** *Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise: That it may be, well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

For the duties are like birds with two wings, or like a pair of scales, balance for each side. There is the child's duty, but there is the parent's duty too.

**5-9.** *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;*

Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the saint shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, Mind that. We may hear a good deal about the duties of servants. Let us hear something about the duties of masters and mistresses. "Ye masters, do the same things unto them."

**9.** *Forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.*

Very beautifully balanced is the whole system of gospel morals. There is no undue advantage given by the fact of our being rendered equal in Christ, so that the servant is to be less obedient to the

master, or the child to the parent; neither is there any undue power given to those who are in authority; but the grace of God teaches all to do unto all as we would that they should do unto us.

**10.** *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord,*

You cannot do right if you are not strong. Unless you have the backbone of principle — unless you have spiritual muscle and sinew by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in you, you cannot continue to do that which is right. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord.”

**10, 11.** *And in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God,*

First, be strong, and then put on armor. It is no use putting armor on a weak man, or else it will be what James said it was — a capital invention, He said, because he who wore it would come to no harm, and certainly do no harm, for he could not stir in it. Now you must be strong first, but then not trust in your strength, but put on the armor which is here described. And yet it would be useless to have the armor unless you are first strong. “Put on the whole armor of God.”

**11, 13.** *That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

To keep your ground, not to give way in any respect, and blessed is that man whose name is Stand-fast, and whose practice is to hold fast — “having done all to stand.”

**14.** *Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,*

Nothing will so tighten up your garments and keep them right as a girdle of sincerity and truthfulness. If we are not true, whatever else we are, we are but loosely arrayed. We shall come to mischief. “Having your loins girt about with truth.”

**14.** *And having on the breastplate of righteousness;*

A grand protection when God has given you to be holy, and when the principle which covers your heart and shields your members is righteousness.

**15.** *And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

Peace in year own heart, peace with God, peace with man. Peacefulness and peace. No shoes like these. A man that has a merry heart makes many a mile fly beneath him, but a heavy heart is a slow traveler. “Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

This exposition consisted of readings from EPHESIANS 4. AND 6:1-15.

## **EPHESIANS 6:10-24**

**10.** *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

Everything depends upon that. Whether you are called upon to work, or to wait, or to watch, or to suffer, you have need to be strong. If you are not yourself strong, the very armor that you wear will be a burden to you. It is of the utmost importance that Christians should be as strong in grace as they can possibly be. And the power that is to be in them is to be the power of God: “the power of his might.” What a wonderful power that is! The power of flesh is weakness, and the power of man is fading but the power of God is almighty and unchangeable; and if we can be girt about with this power there is scarcely any limit to what we may successfully attempt. “Finally,” — as if this were a matter of the highest importance, to be considered first and last. — “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.” You know how strong Paul himself was; he was a veritable giant for Christ, and he here calls upon his brethren to be as he was, he did not want to be brother to dwarfs, so he appealed to his brethren to “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”

**11.** *Put on the whole armor of God, —*

The armor of God will not serve you unless you yourself are strong. It needs a strong man to carry girdle, and breastplate, and shoes, and shield, and helmet, and sword. Let me impress upon you the fact that we must first of all get strong within, and after that “put on the whole armor of God,” that armor which God has provided for the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, that armor which distinguishes men as belonging to the army of God. Do not merely put on a part of it, but put on the whole of it. Do not simply look at the armor, and clean it up so as to keep it bright, but put it on, wear it, it is meant

for you to use in the great battle for the right against the wrong: “Put on the whole armor of God,” —

**11.** *That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

He will attack you sometimes by force and sometimes by fraud. By might or by sleight he will seek to overcome you, and no unarmed man can stand against him. Never go out without all your armor on, for you can never tell where you may meet the devil. He is not omnipresent, but nobody can tell where he is not, for he and his troops of devils appear to be found everywhere on this earth.

**12.** *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, —*

Our great fight is not against our fellow-men. As Christians, we go not forth armed with sword and shield to fight against “flesh and blood,” —

**12.** *But against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Our battle is against evil wherever it is to be found, against evil in every shape and form. Evil is as much in the world today as it was in Paul’s time, and we must fight against it everywhere. We are not to shut our eyes to it, or try to patch up a compromise with it. Christians are bound to fight against evil principalities, evil powers, the evil rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in high places.

**13.** *Therefore take unto you the whole armor of God,*

What stress the apostle lays upon this point! He repeats the command he had just given, and again emphasizes the fact that it is “the whole armor of God” that is to be worn. There are some professing Christians who only in part obey the injunction here given, but it is no use to wear a part of the Christian armor, and to leave the rest of the soul unarmed. A little leak will sink a ship, and the absence of one piece of the armor of God may cost a man his soul: “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God,” —

**13.** *That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

That is what we have to do, to keep our place and our standing as Christians right to the end. To be apparently pure and holy for a time is no use at all. Transient professors will find everlasting ruin;

“but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” We are in God’s army for life; we can never quit this warfare till God shall call us home.

**14.** *Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, —*

Let this girdle of the everlasting truth of God brace you up. Let it tighten all the rest of your armor.

**14.** *And having on the breastplate of righteousness;*

Let your heart be guarded by the knowledge that you are right with God, — that you love that which is holy and true. Put on the righteousness of Christ himself as the best possible protection for your heart.

**15.** *And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

Rough roads grow smooth when these blessed gospel sandals are on your feet. A little stone in the shoe will make the pilgrim’s progress a very wearisome and painful one, so try to keep out all the stones, — everything about which you have any scruple, or that you think may be wrong; and walk in the safe and narrow way set forth in the gospel of peace.

**16.** *above all, —*

Over all, covering all from head to foot, —

**16.** *Taking the shield of faith*

For you need this shield to protect both your armor and yourself.

**16.** *Therewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

Not only the fiery darts of the wicked one, but those also of wicked men and wicked women who may throw at you afar darts that are all ablaze, which would burn as well as pierce you if you were not well guarded against them. Nothing can quench these fiery darts but the shield of faith.

**17.** *And take the helmet of salvation, —*

You used to wear the helmet of pride with its fine nodding plumes, but that has been taken off by you long ago. Now put on “the helmet of Salvation.” This will effectually defend your head, and no sword will be able to cleave through it to injure you. Your brain and everything that is connected with your mental powers will be right when you know that you are saved, and when the power of God’s salvation is working within you.

**17. *And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.***

There is no sword like that; it pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Nothing can resist the Word of God if it is only wielded aright. There is one more weapon in the heavenly armoury: —

**18. *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, —***

When you cannot use your sword, and even when you can hardly grasp your shield, you can pray. That weapon of “all prayer” is of the handiest kind, because it can be turned in any and every direction. “Praying always with all prayer” — groaning prayers, weeping prayers, prayers that are made up of single words, prayers that have not a word in them, prayers for others, prayers of confession, prayers of thanksgiving, — “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,” —

**18. *And watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;***

But will prayer for other people help us? Yes, very much. You will sometimes find that, when you cannot pray for yourself, it is a good plan to pray for somebody else. Think of some child of God, and pray for him, and then the fire of supplication will soon burn up in your heart. The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends, and he will do the same for you. I have heard many of our members say that, when they have felt bound in prayer, they have pleaded for their Pastor and afterwards they have been able to pray for themselves. I advise more of you to try that plan; it will do me good, and then if it also does you good, there will be a double advantage in it. Paul was of the same mind as I am, for he added, —

**19, 20. *And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds:***

“An ambassador in bonds!” Such a thing was never heard of in earthly courts. We never think of chaining an ambassador, but this is how men treated this great messenger from the court of heaven.

**20-22. *That therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you***

*all things: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.*

It is well for Christian people to know how it fares with their spiritual guides. Paul wished the Ephesian saints to know in what state of heart he found himself, that they might the more intelligently pray for him.

**23, 24.** *Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen*

I am sure that we can heartily repeat that benediction May the Lord send much of his grace to all his people, in every part of the earth, who love him in sincerity! Amen.



# PHILIPPIANS

## PHILIPPIANS 1:12-30

**12-14.** *But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the thing, which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*

Notice the beautiful self-forgetfulness of the apostle Paul. So long as the, gospel could be more widely published, he did not mind where he was, or what he suffered. He was able to witness for Christ among the Praetorian guards, who had the charge of the prison where he was confined, and who also, in their turn, were on duty in Caesar's palace; so Paul says that, through his being in bonds there, the particulars concerning his imprisonment were talked about even in the imperial palace, and by that means the gospel was made known to many in Caesar's household. Then, in addition, other brethren, who might perhaps have felt compelled to be quiet in his presence, finding that their leader was removed from them, waxed confident to come out and "speak the word without fear." The same sort of thing has often happened since. You have sometimes seen a widely-spreading oak tree cut down, and you have missed its grateful shadow; yet, afterwards, you have discovered that many little trees, which would have, been dwarfed beneath its shade, have grown more rapidly in its absence; and, in like manner, the removal of some eminent servant of the Lord Jesus Christ has frequently made room for others to spring up, and more than fill his place.

**15-19.** *Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I*

*know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,—*

It is much to be desired that all who preach Christ should preach in a right spirit; but even if they do not, let us be glad that Christ is preached anyhow, Even though it is only a portion of the gospel that is proclaimed, and there is much mixed with it from which we greatly differ, yet, if Christ is preached, his gospel will win its own way, and work out his great purposes of love and mercy, You have, perhaps, sometimes seen a little fire kindled among the dead autumn leaves which are dank and damp; and you have noticed that, despite, all the smoke, the fire has continued to live and burn. So is it with the eternal truth of God. Notwithstanding all the error with which it is often damped, and almost smothered, it will live, and the truth will conquer the error which is piled upon it. So Paul says, “I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,”—

**20, 21.** *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

Again I bid you remark Paul’s devotion and self-forgetfulness. It seems to be a matter of no choice with him whether he serves God in life or glorifies him in death. The emblem of the American Baptist Missionary Union is an ox standing between a plough and an altar, with the motto, “Ready for either,”—Ready to spend and be spent in labour, or to be a sacrifice, whichever the Lord pleases.

**22-22.** *But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*

What a happy church is that where the members all “stand fast in one spirit,” and where they are all “with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;—not striving with each other, but all fighting for the faith once for all delivered to the saints!

**28.** *And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.*

They give you up as lost because they cannot frighten you; they take it as a token of your perdition that you are not terrified by them, and it is so to them; yet, to you, the peacefulness with which you can endure slander and persecution should be a token of your salvation.

**29.** *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;*

What an honour this is to be conferred upon any follower of Christ,—“not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake”! It is not every Christian who receives this mark of honour. There are some believers who have peculiarly tender places in their hearts, and who are wounded and gashed by the unkind remarks of those who love them not because they love the Lord Jesus Christ. To you, my brother, my sister, it is given—and you may well rejoice in such a gift,—“not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.”

**30.** *Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

This exposition consisted of readings from PHILIPPIANS 1:12-30; AND 2:1-13.

### **PHILIPPIANS 1:21-30**

**21.** *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

“To me to live is Christ.” If he lived, he lived to know more of Christ studying his person, and learning by his happy experience so that he increased in his knowledge of his Lord and Saviour. If he lived, he lived to imitate Christ more closely, becoming more and more conformed to his image. If he lived, he lived to make Christ more and more known to others, and to enjoy Christ more himself. In these four senses, he might well say, “For to me to live is Christ,” — to know Christ more, to imitate Christ more, to preach Christ

more, and to enjoy Christ more. "And to die is gain," because death, he felt, would free him from all sin and from all doubts as to his state in the present and the future. It would be gain to him, for then he would no longer be tossed upon the stormy sea, but he would be safe upon the land whither he was bound. It would be gain to him, for then he would be free from all temptations both from within and from without. It would be gain to him, for then he would be delivered from all his enemies; there would be no cruel Nero, no blaspheming Jews, no false brethren then. It would be gain to him, for then he would be delivered from all suffering, there would be no more shipwrecks, no more being beaten with rods, or being stoned, for him then. Dying, too, would be gain for him, for he would then be free from all fear of death; and having once died, he would die no more for ever. It would be gain to him, for he would find in heaven better and more perfect friends than he would leave behind on earth; and he would find, above all, his Saviour, and be a partaker of his glory. This is a wide subject, and the more we think over it, the more sweetness shall we get out of it.

**22.** *But if I live in the flesh,*

That is a very different thing from living to the flesh.

**22.** *This is the fruit of my labour;*

He lived to work for Christ, and to see souls saved as the fruit of his labour.

**22, 23.** *Yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:*

There were the two currents flowing in opposite directions. The apostle seemed to hear two voices speaking to him; one of them said, "Live, and you will gather the fruit of your labour, you will see sinners saved, churches established, and the kingdom of Christ extended in the earth." The other said, "Die, and you will be with Christ;" so he knew not which to choose.

**24-26.** *Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shalt abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.*

The apostle desired to die, yet he was willing to live. Death would have been gain to him, yet he would endure the loss of living if he might thereby benefit others. Let us also always prefer the welfare of others before our own, and care rather to serve others than to make ourselves never so happy. Now the apostle gives these saints at Philippi a loving exhortation: —

*27. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;*

The unity of the church is of the utmost importance. When there is pockets of brotherly love, the perfect bond is lost; and as a bundle of rods, when once the binding cord is cut, becomes merely a number of weak and single twigs, so is it with a divided church. May we always be kept in one holy bond of perfect union with each other!

*28. And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition,*

“Away with them! Away with them!” cried the heathen; “those who are not ashamed to acknowledge the crucified Christ are only worthy of perdition.” But of what was their courage a token to themselves?

*28. But to you of salvation, and that of God.*

For when saints can bear fierce persecution without flinching it is an evident sign that they are saved by the grace of God.

*29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him,*

Which is a great gift.

*29. But also to suffer for his sake;*

Which is a still greater gift.

*30. Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

“The same agony” it is in the Greek, as if every Christian must, in his measure, go through the same agony through which the apostle went, striving and wrestling against sin, groaning under its burden, agonizing to be delivered from it and labouring to bring others out of its power.

## **PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11**

**1, 2.** *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord of one mind.*

He knew that these saints at Philippi loved him. They had sent once and again to relieve his necessities, so he pleaded with them, by their love to him, to love each other. He does as much as say, "If you really do love me, if it is not a sham, if you have any sympathy with me, and with my labours and sufferings, if you really have the same spirit that burns in my breast, make my heart full of joy by clinging to one another, by being like-minded, 'having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.'"

**3.** *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory;*

This would be a good motto for those who are intending to build new places of worship. Let them not be built through strife, because of a squabble among the people of God, but make sure that all concerned are actuated by right motives, and seeking only the glory of God. Then, sometimes, if one gives a guinea, another feels that he must give two so as to excel him; this is giving out of vainglory. Let nothing be done in this way, but as unto the Lord, and as in his sight, let us do all our works, and give all our gifts.

**3, 4.** *But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

Consider how you can help others, and in what way you can prosper them both in temporal things and in spiritual. You are members of a body, so one member is not to think for itself alone, the unity of the whole body requires that every separate and distinct part of it should be in harmony with the whole.

**5-8.** *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found*

*in fashion as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

He humbled himself, so be you not unwilling to humble yourself. Lower than the cross Christ could not go, his death was one of such extreme ignominy that he could not have been more disgraced and degraded. Be you willing to take the lowest place in the Church of God, and to render the humblest service, count it an honour to be allowed to wash the saints feet. Be humble in mind; nothing is lost by cherishing this spirit, for see how Jesus Christ was honoured in the end.

**9-11.** *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Some foolish and superstitious persons make this passage a pretext for bowing their heads at the name of Jesus whenever it is mentioned. Nothing can be more senseless, because the passage means no such thing. What we are taught here is the great truth that Jesus Christ, though once he stooped to the lowest shame, is now exalted to the very highest glory, and even the devils in hell are compelled to own the might of his power. We are also to learn from this passage that the way to ascend is to descend. He who would be chief must be willing to be the servant of all. The King of kings was the Servant of servants; and if you would be crowned with honour by-and-by, you must be willing to be despised and rejected of men now. The Lord give us this gracious humbleness of mind, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from PHILIPPIANS 1:21-30; and 2:1-11

## **PHILIPPIANS 2:1-13**

**1-4.** *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, be one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things,—*

Do not obey the world's maxim "Take care of Number One."  
"Look not every man on his own things,"—

*4-7 But every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation,—*

Observe that expression: "of no reputation,"—

*7. And took upon him the form of a servant,—*

A slave,—

*7, 8. And was, made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

What a cruel and ignominious death for the Son of God to suffer! Did he lose anything by all this wondrous condescension? Will you lose anything by any dishonour that may come upon you for Christ's sake, for the truth's sake? No; listen to what followed our Saviour's humiliation:—

*9-11. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Note how the apostle, after writing on this high theme, again seeks the practical good of his friends at Philippi:—

*12, 13. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

This exposition consisted of readings from PHILIPPIANS 1:12-30; AND 2:1-13.

## **PHILIPPIANS 2:1-18**

*1, 2. if there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

Paul did not mean to doubt that there is "any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, any bowels

and mercies,” for no one knew better than he did how those blessings abound to them that are in Christ Jesus. He put it by way of argument. If there be consolation in Christ, since there is consolation in Christ, since there is comfort of love, since there is fellowship of the Spirit, be one in Christ; be not divided; love one another: “be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”

**3. *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory;***

“Nothing”: never give to exceed other givers. Never preach that you may be a better preacher than anybody else; never work in the Sunday-school with the idea of being thought a very successful teacher. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory.”

**3. *But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.***

There is some point in which your friend excels you. Notice that rather than the point in which you excel him. Try to give him the higher seat; seek yourself to take the lowest room.

**4. *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.***

Have a large heart, so that, though you care for yourself in spiritual things, and desire your own soul prosperity, you may have the same desire for every other Christian man or woman.

**5. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:***

What an example we have set before us in the Lord Jesus Christ! We are to have the mind of Christ; and that in the most Christly way, for here we have Christ set out to the life.

**6. *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:***

For he was equal with God.

**7. *But made himself of no reputation,***

Emptied himself of all his honour, of all his glory, of all his majesty, and of all the reverence paid to him by the holy spirits around the throne.

**7, 8. *And took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,***

He had not descended low enough yet, though he had come down all the way from the Godhead to our manhood: “he humbled himself.”

**8, 9.** *And became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him,*

He stooped, who can tell how low? He was raised, who shall tell how high? “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him.”

**9.** *And given him a name which is above every name;*

He threw away his name; he emptied himself of his reputation. How high is his reputation now! How glorious is the name that God hath given him as the reward of his redemptive work!

**10, 11.** *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Now is he higher than the highest. Now every one must confess his divinity. With shame and terror, his adversaries shall bow before him; with delight and humble adoration, his friends shall own him Lord of all: “that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” See how the greatest glory of Christ is the glory of the Father. He never desired any other glory but that. The highest honour you can ever have, O child of God, is to bring honour to your Father who is in heaven. Do you not think so? I know you do.

**12.** *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

Get out of self. Work out your salvation from pride, from vainglory, from disputations and strife.

**13.** *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

You may very well work out what God works in. If he does not work it in, you will never work it out; but while he works within your spirit both to will and to do, you may safely go on to will and to do; for your willing and your doing will produce lowliness of spirit, and unity of heart with your brethren.

**14.** *Do all things without murmurings and disputings:*

Do not say, "You give me too much to do; you always give me the hard work; you put me in the obscure corner." No, no; "do all things without murmurings." And do not begin fighting over a holy work; for, if you do, you spoil it in the very beginning, and how can you then hope for a blessing upon it? "Do all things without murmurings and disputings."

15. *That ye may be blameless and harmless,*

None finding fault with you, and you not finding fault with others; neither harming nor harmed: "blameless and harmless."

15. *The sons of God, without rebuke,*

So that men cannot rebuke you, and will have to invent a lie before they can do it; and even then the falsehood is too palpable to have any force in it: "without rebuke."

15. *In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*

You cannot straighten them; but you can shine. They would destroy you if they could; but all you have to do is to shine. If Christian men would give more attention to their shining, and pay less attention to the crooked and perverse generation, much more would come of it. But now we are advised to "keep abreast of the times," and to "catch the spirit of the age." If I could ever catch that spirit, I would hurl it into the bottomless abyss; for it is a spirit that is antagonistic to Christ in all respects. We are just to keep clear of all that, and "shine as lights in the world."

16. *Holding forth the word of life;*

You are to hold forth the Word of life as men hold forth a torch. Your shining is largely to consist in holding forth the Word of life.

16. *That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*

God's ministers cannot bear the thought of having laboured in vain; and yet if some of us were to die, what would remain of all we have done? I charge you, brethren, to think of what your life-work has been hitherto. Will it remain? Will it abide? Will it stand the test of your own departure? Ah, if you have any fear about it, you may well go to God in prayer, and cry, "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it." Paul cared much about God's work; but he did not trouble about himself.

17. *Yea, and if He offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.*

If he might be poured forth as a drink-offering on their behalf, or offered up as a whole burnt-offering in the service of the Saviour, he would be glad. He could not bear to have lived in vain; but to spend his life for the glory of his Lord, would be ever a joy to him.

18. *For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.*

To live and to die for Jesus Christ, with the blessing of the Father resting upon us, is a matter for us to joy in unitedly and continually. God help us so to do!

### **PHILIPPIANS 3**

The Holy Ghost incited this Epistle by the pen of his servant Paul. May he also write it on our hearts!

1. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.*

When you get to “finally,” when you are very near the end of your journey, still “rejoice in the Lord.” “Finally,” says Paul, as if this was the end of his epistle, the conclusion of all his teaching: “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” But never do it finally, never come to an end of it. Rejoice in the Lord, and yet again rejoice, and yet again rejoice; and as long as you live, rejoice in the Lord.

1. *To write the same things to you, tome indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.*

Some hearers are like the Athenian academicians; they want continually to hear something new. The apostle says, “To have the same things written to you, is safe.” So is it for you, dear friends; to have the same gospel, the same Jesus, the same Holy Spirit, made known to you, is safe. New doctrine is dangerous doctrine.

2. *Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers,*

They are like to dogs. If they fawn upon you, they will bemire you, if they do not bite you.

2, 3. *Beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

There were some who had confidence in circumcision, who greatly troubled Paul. The apostle says that they were “the

concision”, the cutters-off, of whom he would have the Philippians beware.

**4.** *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:*

If any man might have had confidence in the flesh, truly Paul might.

**5, 6.** *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.*

So that I do not know what more he could have had. If a Jew had tried to select a man who had something to glory in, he could not have picked any man to stand in the front of Paul. He was truly a Jew, he had received the initiatory rite, and on the right day. He was born of the innermost tribe, the tribe of Benjamin, in whose country stood the temple itself. He was O, Pharisee, who pushed the law to the extreme; he tithed his mint and his cumin. Nobody could have anything to glory in which Paul had not.

**7.** *But what things were gain, to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*

So that, when we come to Christ, whatever we have to trust to, we must put away. We must write it on the other side of the ledger. We had entered it as a gain; now we must set it down as a loss; it is of no value whatsoever, it is a loss if it shall tempt us to trust any less in Christ.

**8.** *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:*

Those are sweet words, “my Lord.” Remember how Thomas cried, in ecstasy, “My Lord and my God.” Paul, by faith putting his finger into the prints of the nails, says, “My Lord.”

**8, 9.** *For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win, Christ, and be found in him,*

Oh, what a precious place to be found in, “in him,” trusting in him, hidden away in him, a member of his body, as it were, losing myself in him!

**9.** *Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law,*

He does not say, not trusting it, but not even having it, not counting it, not thinking it worth while to put down among his possessions that which he once prized so much.

**9, 10.** *But that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which; is of God by faith: that I may know him,*

Paul means, "That I may know him more than I now do;" for he knew him, and delighted in him; but he felt as if he had not begun really to know Christ. He was like a child at school, who has learnt to read and to write, and knows so much that he begins to want to know more.

**10, 11.** *And the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*

He knew that all the dead would rise again; but he aspired to the first resurrection: "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

**12, 13.** *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended:*

He did count himself as saved, he knew that he was Christ's; but he did not count himself as having realized all that Christ meant to do for him and by him. He did not reckon that he had reached as far as he could reach, or learnt all that he could learn, or done all that he could do.

**13, 14.** *But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

You have seen a man running very fast. How he leans forward, as though he would send his heart before him, and go quicker than his legs can carry him! So did the apostle "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

**15, 16.** *Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Let us keep all the good that we have received; let us not give up the truth that we have learnt; let us not leave the way along which we have traveled so far; and let us keep together, let perfect unanimity prove that the work of grace is going on in one as well as in another.

**17.** *Brethren, be followers together of me,*

In these days, certain people find fault with Paul, and speak of him as if he were not inspired, and not to be followed as Christ was; but here he expressly says what no man like Paul would ever say unless moved of the Holy Spirit, for he was modest, and by no means anxious to push himself forward: “Brethren, be followers together of me.”

**17.** *And mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*

Mark them, but do not follow them. See how they walk, but do not imitate them: “Have us for an ensample.”

**18.** *(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*

I lay a stress upon the article: “They are the enemies of the cross of Christ.” Professors of religion, who get into the church, and yet lead ungodly lives, are the worst enemies that the cross of Christ has. These are the sort of men who bring tears into the minister’s eyes; these are they who break his heart; they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

**19.** *Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)*

“Who mind earthly things,” — even when they profess to be minding spiritual things; pretending to be followers of Christ up to heaven, and yet really making again of the things of God here below.

**20.** *For our conversation is in heaven;*

Can you say that, dear friend? Is your citizenship in heaven? Is your conversation there? Do you often commune with your Lord upon the throne? Judge yourselves whether it be so or not. It is a very poor thing to have a name to be in heaven, and yet never to have any converse with heaven. I wish that we could all say that we

talk more to God than we do to men, and have more business upward than we have here below.

**20.** *From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

He is coming! He is coming! Are we looking for him? This is the true position of the Christian, looking for the appearing of his Lord.

**21.** *Who shall change our vile body,*

“The body of our humiliation.” We have only part of the redemption while we are here. The soul is regenerated, newly-born; but the body is not. “The body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” The redemption of the purchased possession will be perfect at the resurrection. The resurrection will be, to the body, what regeneration is to the soul. We sometimes wonder why we are sick, when Christ could make us well in a moment; but the reason is that, as yet, he has not fully brought his divine power to bear upon the body. That is to be by-and-by; we are waiting for the Saviour, “who shall change our vile body.”

**21.** *That it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

May he show some part of that blessed power in us tonight! Amen.

### **PHILIPPIANS 3**

**1.** *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.*

As much as to say, “If this were the last sentence that I should write to you, I would say, Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.’ It is your privilege, it is your duty, to rejoice in God; — not in your health, your wealth, your children, your prosperity, but in the Lord.” There is the unchanging and unbounded source of joy. It will do you no harm to rejoice in the Lord; the more you rejoice in him, the more spiritually-minded will you become. “Finally, my brethren.” That is, even to the end, not with you the bitter end; but even to the end of life, rejoice in the Lord. Make this the finis of everything, the end of every day, the end of every year, the end of life. “Finally, my

brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” Blessed is that religion in which it is a duty to be happy.

1. *To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.*

Saying the same thing over and over again is Safe, for your minds do not catch the truth at the first hearing, and your memories are slippery.

2. *Beware of dogs, —*

Men of a doggish, captious, selfish spirit. In Paul’s day, there were some who were called Cynics, that is to say, dogs: “Beware of dogs,” —

2. *Beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.*

By which Paul meant those Jews who made a great point of circumcision; he calls them here “the cutters”, for they mangled and cut the Church of God in pieces: “Beware of the concision.”

3. *For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

These are three marks of the true Israel of God; have you all of them, -worshipping God in the spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh?

4. *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh.*

If anybody might, Paul might. If birth, if education, or if external religiousness could have saved anybody in the world, it would have saved Saul of Tarsus.

4. 5. *If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day,*

The ritual was observed even to the hour in his case.

5. *Of the stock of Israel,*

Not an Edomite or a Samaritan, but “of the stock of Israel,” and of the very center of that stock.

5. *Of the tribe of Benjamin,*

Which remained with Judah, faithful, long after the ten tribes had gone aside.

5. *An Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee,*

That is, one who observed all the minutiae and details of the ceremonial law, and a good deal more, — the traditions of the

elders which hung like moss about the old stone of Jewish ceremonialism. Paul had observed all that.

**6. *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church!***

Be was most zealous in the cause that he thought right. Bitterly, cruelly, even to the death, did he persecute the believers in Jesus.

**6. *Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.***

Paul had been kept from the vices into which many fell. In his young days, he had been pure; and all his days, he had been upright and sincere. As far as he knew, to the best of his light, he had observed the law of God. In another place, he calls himself the chief of sinners; and so he was, because he persecuted the Church of God; but, in another sense, I may say of him that there is no man who stood so good a chance of being justified by works as Paul did, if there could have been any justification in that way.

**7. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.***

His faith in Jesus reversed all his former estimates, 'so that his gains he counted to be losses. He thought it so much the worse, concerning zeal, to have persecuted the church, and so much to his injury to have imagined that he was blameless in the presence of God.

**8. *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, —***

Offal, refuse, garbage, —

**8. *That I may win Christ, —***

He had every opportunity of advancement. He was a fine scholar, and might have reached the highest degree in connection with the Sanhedrim and the synagogue; but he thought nothing of all that, he threw it all away as worthless, and declared that this was his ambition: "That I may win Christ," —

**9. *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:***

It must be more glorious to be justified by God than by ourselves. It must be more safe to wear the righteousness of Christ than to wear our own. Nothing can so dignify our manhood as to

have Christ himself to be “the Lord our Righteousness.” This Paul chose in preference to everything else.

**10. 11.** *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*

See to what Paul is looking forward, — resurrection, — and therefore he lets this life go as of secondary importance. He is willing to suffer as Christ suffered, and to die as Christ died. You and I may never be called to make that great sacrifice; but if we are true followers of Christ, we shall be prepared for it. If ever it should happen that Christ and our life shall be put in competition, we must not deliberate for a moment, for Christ is all, and we must be ready to give up all for Christ.

**12.** *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect:*

He does not say that anybody has been perfect, but he does say that he was not so himself; and I should think that any man who believed himself to be better than Paul would thereby prove at once that he was not perfect, for he must be sadly lacking in humility.

**12.** *But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

“All that Christ meant me to be, I want to be. All that Christ meant to give me, I want to have. All that he meant me to do, I want to do; to apprehend, to lay hold of that for which I am laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”

**13.** *Brethren, I count not, myself to have apprehended:*

That is Paul’s judgment concerning himself; he has not yet attained to the full all that the religion of Christ can give him.

**13. 14.** *But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Always making progress, — throwing himself into it, having the reward before him, the prize of perfection in Christ, and running towards it with all his might.

**15.** *Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect*

Or, "would be perfect," —

**15.** *Be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

I admire that sentence. If any brother has not reached a full knowledge of the truth, let us not condemn him, or cast him out of our company, but say to him, "God shall reveal even this unto you."

**16.** *Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*

There are some points upon which we are all agreed. There is some standing-ground where the babe in grace may meet with the man in Christ Jesus. Well, as far as we do see eye to eye, let us cooperate with one another, let us have our hearts knit together in a holy unanimity. "Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." There are some people who are always looking out for points of difference; their motto seems to be, "Whereinsoever we differ, let us split away from one another." Their great idea is that by dividing we shall conquer. The fact is that, by separating ourselves from one another, we shall miss all hope of strength, and play into the hands of the adversaries.

**17.** *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*

For the true servant of Christ teaches by his life as much as by his words.

**18.** *(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)*

For our conversation — Or, citizenship —

**20. 21.** *Is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, —*

vile so far that it has been defiled by sin, vile in comparison with that body which shall be, — "Who shall change our vile body," the body of our humiliation, —

**21.** *That it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working 'whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

## PHILIPPIANS 3

### 1. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.*

Let this be the end of everything; before you get to the end of it, and when you do get to the end of it, “rejoice in the Lord.” It is incumbent upon us, as Christians, to rise out of our despondencies. Joy should be the normal state of the Christian. What a happy religion is ours in which it is a duty to be happy! “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.”

### 1. *To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.*

To go over the same old truths again and again, to proclaim the same precepts, and teach the same doctrines, is not grievous to us, and it is safe for you to hear these things again and again. If they have not made their due impression upon you already, perhaps they will do so when they are repeated in your hearing. At any rate it is safe for you to hear or read over and over again the old, old story with which you are already familiar.

### 2. *Beware of dogs,* —

Contentious persons, — persons of coarse and corrupt habits: “Beware of dogs,” —

### 2. *Beware of evil workers,*

However prettily they may talk, if they are workers of evil, beware of them.” By their fruits ye shall know them.” Their speech may be clever, but if their lips be unclean, beware of them.

### 2. *Beware of the concision.*

Beware of the cutters off, those who excommunicate and cut off others because they do not happen quite to agree with them in certain rites and ceremonies.

### 3. *For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

This is the real circumcision, which is of the spirit, and not of the flesh. The men who have abandoned all confidence in themselves, the men who have come to rely upon Christ alone, the men who “rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,” those who care not for outward rites and ceremonies, but who worship God in the spirit, — these are the true circumcision.

### 4. *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh.*

“If any man might trust in outward religion, I might,” said Paul; yet he was the very man who would not do so, and who warned others against doing it.

*4-6. If any other man thinketh that he hath 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.*

So that, if anybody could have boasted of what he was by birth, what he was by profession, what he was by the display of religious zeal, Paul could have boasted as boldly as anyone could, for in all those respects he was second to nobody. You know that it is a very easy thing, or it ought to be a very easy thing, for some people to be humble, for they have nothing to be proud of, but here is a man who had much of which he might have been proud. According to the letter of the law, he was a diamond of the first order; yet see what a different verdict he gives after grace has opened his eyes.

*7-9. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yet doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*

Everything else must go in order to secure that. Paul thinks that to be righteous by faith is infinitely better than all the righteousness that can come by works and ceremonies. He therefore utterly despises that which he once thought to be more precious than gold; and he takes possession of, as his greatest treasure, that which he once trampled in the mire. Now his great desire is —

*10-12. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made comfortable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.*

You perhaps suppose that Paul’s present satisfaction arises out of a consciousness of personal perfection, but it is not so. He has not won the race yet, his joy arises from the fact that he is in the right

course and that he is running in the right direction: “Not as though I had already attained, either were already I perfect:

**12.** *But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

“I want to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. He has grasped me in order to make me perfect, and I want to grasp that perfection. He has laid hold of me to rid me of my sin, and I want to lay hold of a glean riddance of sin, apprehending that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

**13-15.** *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

If you are a true believer in Jesus, be of this mind, always to be pressing forward to something higher and better. If God has given you one form of perfection, press onward to a much higher form of perfection. Seek continually to rise. The eagle’s motto is, “Higher, Higher!” Let it be your motto too. Many of God’s people do not believe that he can make them what he means to make them, or, at least, they act as if they did not believe that he can. They are not, apparently, conscious of what their privileges really are, and are living far below where they might live in the happy enjoyment of peace and power and usefulness. May God help us, by his gracious Spirit, to know all of Christ that we can know, and to be as much like Christ as we can be.

**16-18.** *Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk,-*

I suppose Paul is referring to many even in the church of his day: “For many walk,” —

**18.** *Of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ*

The worst enemies that the cross of Christ has are the enemies inside the professing church of Christ.

**19.** *Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)*

They call themselves spiritual, yet they live for earthly things; indulging their appetites, living for self, yet pretending to be Christians, whereas selfishness is the very reverse of Christianity.

**20, 21.** *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

## **PHILIPPIANS 4**

**1.** *Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the lord, my dearly beloved.*

Paul had a very warm affection for the church at Philippi. You remember how that church was established,-first with the baptized household of Lydia, and afterwards with the baptized household of the jailer. These saints at Philippi were in a special sense Paul's spiritual children, they were very generous and kind to him and his heart was very warm with love to them, so he called them, "my brethren dearly beloved," and then again, "my dearly beloved."

**2.** *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.*

These two women had fallen out with one another, they evidently differed upon some question or other so that they were not "of the same mind in the Lord," and Paul thought it so important that there should be perfect unity and love in the church at Philippi, as well as everywhere else, that he besought these two women, of whom we know nothing else, that they would be "of the same mind in the Lord." Notice that he beseeches each of them in exactly the same way: "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche." He has a "beseech" for each of them. Perhaps, if he had written, "I beseech Euodias and Syntyche," the latter lady might have fancied that he was not quite so earnest about her as he was about Euodias so he puts it, "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." Have any of you fallen out, my dear friends? I do not know of any of you who have done so, but if you

have, I say to all you, men or women, “I beseech you, that you be of the same mind in the Lord.” There is nothing like perfect unity in a Christian church; if there is even a little division, it will grow to something much worse by-and-by; so I beseech you “be of the same mind in the Lord.”

**3.** *And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow,-*  
Their minister,-

**3.** *Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life?*

They helped me, and they have helped you, so help them with encouraging words and in every other way that you can.

**4.** *Rejoice in the Lord always:*

Not only now and then, on high days and holiday, have a time of joy, but “rejoice in the Lord always.”

**4.** *And again I say, Rejoice.*

He had said this before, as you will see in the first verse of the third chapter, which begins, “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord;” now he writes it again, and repeats it in the same verse: “Rejoice. Rejoice.” It is so important that believers should be full of joy that Paul writes three times over in a short space, “Rejoice in the Lord;” “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

**5.** *Let your moderation be known unto all men.*

Be men who are God-governed, because God governs those who run to excess in nothing. Some go to excess in one way, and some in another; but all excess is to be avoided: “Let your moderation be known unto all men.”

**5, 6.** *The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing;*

This is not a good translation of the original, it does not convey the sense of the Greek, it should to, “Be anxious for nothing.” Of course you ought to be careful about everything. You cannot be too careful, but you never ought to be care-full, you must care to be right with God, yet you must not be filled with care about anything. “Be anxious for nothing.” Do not fret, do not worry, do not make other people miserable by your fretting and fuming and fueling.

**6.** *But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests to made known unto God*

Ah! this is the way to find the cure for all your anxieties; take all your trouble to God with a prayer and with a song. Do not go without either the thanksgiving or the prayer; but bear your burden at once to God, and ask him to bear it for you.

**7, 8.** *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

If anything is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, be you on that side. A Christian is on the side of everything that makes for purity, chastity, and honesty, that is for the good of men and the glory of God. Whenever anyone is making out a list of those who will fight for everything that is right and good, every Christian should say to the man with the ink-horn, "Set down my name, sir."

**9,10.** *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall to with you, But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.*

You see that Paul did not really mean, "Be careful for nothing," for he says here that these Philippians had cared for him, and he praises them for being careful of him. They had lovingly thought of him who was their spiritual father, and when they knew that he was shut up as a prisoner in Rome, and suffering want, they took care to send something to relieve and cheer him.

**11.** *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

"I have been initiated"-for that is the word,-"among those who are content with such things as they have."

**12, 13.** *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

"I can be poor, or I can have abundance, if you send it to me, but these things make no real difference to me. I have been made

invulnerable either to suffering or to abundance.” Blessed is the man who has got as far as that; it is a wonderful work of grace when a man can truly say this.

**14, 15.** *Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.*

I should not wonder if it was Lydia who was at the bottom of that giving and receiving, and perhaps the jailer also; they were evidently thoughtful and grateful people. They remembered the apostle’s sufferings and wants and did all they could to help and cheer him.

**16, 17.** *For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.*

He did not look at it as merely something that would ease him, but he looked at it as a token of gratitude for the spiritual blessings they had received through him. It showed that they loved the gospel which he preached, and that they also loved him for having been blessed by God to their souls; and this cheered and delighted him. But, to show that he was not asking for more, he says:

**18.** *But I have all, and abound: I am full,*

I do not suppose that it amounted to much, but it was all that the apostle needed, and so he says to them, “I have all, and abound: I am full,”-

**18, 19.** *Having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

I am sure that, when they read this verse, they all felt glad that they had had a share in the subscription to relieve the apostle’s wants.

**20, 21.** *Now unto God and our Father to glory for ever and ever. Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.*

“Give them all my love; and tell them how grateful I am to them.”

**21, 22.** *The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.*

Exposed to the greatest perils, and yet brave to confess Christ. They may have been nothing but poor kitchen-maids, or they may have been among the Praetorian guards who watched and guarded the palace and the prisoners, but they must have their title set down in the letter, "chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."

**23.** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

This exposition consisted of readings from 2 KINGS 4:1-7; AND PHILIPPIANS 4.

## **PHILIPPIANS 4**

**1.** *Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, do stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*

You know that the church at Philippi was very dear to the apostle's heart. He could never forget the time when he and Silas prayed with the women at the river side, and afterwards prayed and sang praises unto God in the prison, when the prisoners heard them. Lydia and her household and the Philippian jailor were among the first fruits of Paul's work at Philippi, and there was always a very intimate love between him and the members of the church in that place. They cared for him, and he cared for them. Twice in this one verse he speaks of them as his "dearly beloved." He says that he "longed for them, longed to come and see them face to face, longed that they might be happy in the Lord to the very highest degree. So he says, "my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy." It was such a joy to him even to think of them as his spiritual children and especially to see after what a godly and generous fashion they behaved themselves. Yes, and he calls them his "crown" — a garland which he had won in spiritual wrestling. The Christian man's converts are his joy here, and they will be his crown for ever in glory. Paul bade these Philippians "stand fast in the Lord." It looks a very simple thing to stand fast; but they who try to do it know how difficult a task it is.

**2.** *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.*

Only two women who had fallen out with one another; but the apostle is so anxious for perfect unity that he puts in a "beseech" for

each of them. He does not say which was right and which was wrong; but he would have them “of the same mind in the Lord.” Little differences, even between obscure members of the church, may hinder the work of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is like a dove, and doves love quiet places, they do not come where there is noise and strife. Oh, let us cultivate love towards one another; and if in anything we have disagreed at any time, let us think that we hear Paul saying tonight, “I beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.” Make it up, my sisters, make it up, my brothers, whatever the quarrel is, end it, and “be of the same mind in the Lord.” Bought with the same precious blood, robed in the same perfect righteousness, on the way to the same heaven, “be of the same mind in the Lord.”

**3.** *And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help these women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers, whose name, are in the book of life.*

We do not know who this “true yokefellow” was. Very likely it was Epaphroditus, who carried this epistle to Philippi. Whoever it was, it was someone who had worked with Paul shoulder to shoulder. If two bullocks bear the same yoke, and yet do not agree, they make it very uncomfortable for one another. If one tries to lie down, and the other wants to stand up, or if one goes faster than the other, the yoke becomes doubly galling. Paul speaks of somebody here as having been his “true yokefellow”; and he says to him, “Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel.” What an eminent place women have ever held in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ and here Paul speaks of them as labouring with him in the gospel! Surely, Lydia must have been one of these. “With Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life.” According to some learned commentators, a man’s name may be in the book of life for a time; but it may be removed. If their teaching is true, that book will be very much scratched and blotted. I thank God that I do not believe in any such book as that. If the Lord Jesus Christ has written my name in the book of life, in the great family register of the redeemed, I defy all the devils of hell ever to get it erased.

**4.** *Rejoice in the lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.*

If you ever rejoice in the Lord, you may always rejoice in the Lord, for he is always the same, and always gracious. There is as much reason for rejoicing in God at one time as at another, since he never changes.

**5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men.***

The word “moderation”, in the Greek, is a very difficult word to translate into English. It does not mean moderation in the sense in which some people use the word, for they make it, as I think, almost an accursed one. “Let your moderation” — your gentleness, your willingness, your forbearance — “be known unto all men.” That is what it means. Do not push your own rights too far; stop short of what you might fairly demand and when you feel, at any time, a little vehement in temper, check yourself hold yourself in, bear and forbear. Go not as far as you may, nor even as far as some think that you ought, in defending your own rights; let your gentleness, your yieldingness, be known unto all men.

**5. *The Lord is at hand.***

Christ is coming; why do you put yourself out? The Lord is near you to help you; why are you so excessively anxious? Why are you so carried away with the present temporary trial? “The Lord is at hand.”

**6. *Be careful for nothing;***

Be anxiously careful for nothing; sing, with Faber, —  
“I have no cares, O blessed Lord,  
For all my cares are thine.”

**6-8. *But in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.***

Everything of this kind concerns you, therefore help it as far as you can. Be you on the side of every cause that may be thus described. If it vindicates truth, uprightness, reverence, religion, chastity, holiness, be you on that side. If there is anything the

reverse of this, do not you have anything to do with it, but if there is any movement in the world that will help forward things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, “think on these things,” and so think upon them as to increase their influence among the sons and daughters of men.

**9.** *These things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do:*

It is well when a preacher can speak like that; when he has not to say, “Do as I say, and not as I do,” but when, like the apostle, he can say “those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.”

**9.** *And the God of peace shall be with you.*

The God of peace is always with those who receive his dear Son, and who heed his gospel. It is one of the privileges of true believers that the God of peace shall be constantly with them.

**10.** *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.*

Paul was in prison at Rome; and these Philippians had made a contribution, and they had sent Epaphroditus with it to relieve the apostle in his poverty, so he said to them, “You cared for me before; but for a time you had not the opportunity of helping me, and now you have thought of me again; wherefore, I rejoice in the Lord greatly.”

**11.** *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

Is not that a splendid piece of learning? Paul was a learned man, and so are you, if you have learnt this lesson. You may not be able to put D.D., or LL.D., after your name, but you are a learned man if you can say, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”

**12.** *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound:*

These are two grand things to learn. There are some who know the first, but who do not know the second. I have known several of God’s children who seemed quite eminent for piety when they were abased, but they were never worth anything after they grew rich. They did not know how to abound; they became top-lofty, and far

too great for their place. It was not so with the apostle, for he could truthfully say, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound."

**12.** *Every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

Was he not a true Master of Arts? He had mastered the art of being hungry without murmuring, the art of being full without boasting, the art of suffering need without impatience, the art of abounding without setting his affection on worldly things. He was indeed a Master of Arts of the very highest order.

**13.** *I can do all things —*

That looks like bragging, does it not? Finish the sentence.

**14.** *Through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

There is no improper boasting there, for Paul could do all things through Christ's mighty power. It has been well said that the angels excel in strength, but the saints excel in their weakness. When we are most weak, and Christ strengthens us, then are the most excellent virtues produced.

**14-17.** *Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.*

Their liberality was set down to their account in God's book.

**18, 19.** *But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

It is Paul's God who took care of the Philippians; and it is Paul's God who will take care of you and me: "My God," says Paul, "shall supply all your need, — not as you have supplied mine, out of your poverty, but according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Do any of you know the measure of this immeasurable text, "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus"?

Do not imagine that you will ever exhaust God's riches in glory, or drain the exchequer of all-sufficiency; that cannot be.

**20.** *Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

He blesses us, let us bless him. He supplies all our need according to his riches in glory; let us extol his glory for ever and ever.

**21.** *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.*

Give him a shake of the hand. Say, "How are you, my brother? I wish you well." These hearty salutations ought to be common in every Christian assembly. I always deprecate that wonderful respectability that exists in some places of worship, where nobody knows anybody else; they are too respectable to become acquainted with their brethren. If you are in Christ Jesus, get to know one another. "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus."

**21, 22.** *The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.*

I suppose most of these were only slaves in the imperial household. There may have been one or two, perhaps, of a higher class; but, in all probability, the gospel first reached the slaves in the Roman palace, that pandemonium of vice, where lust and cruelty abounded. There were saints even there; and God still has some of his jewels lying on dunghills.

**23.** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

## **PHILIPPIANS 4**

This Epistle was written by Paul when he was in prison, with iron fetters about his wrists; yet there is no iron in the Epistle. It is full of light, life,

love, and joy, blended with traces of sorrow, yet with a holy delight that rises above his grief.

**1.** *Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*

See how the heart of the apostle is at work; his emotions are not dried up by his personal griefs. He takes a delight in his friends at Philippi; he has a lively recollection of the time when he and Silas were shut up in prison there, and that same night baptized the jailor and his household, and formed the church at Philippi.

*2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.*

These two good women had fallen out with one another. Paul loves them so much that he would not have any strife in the church to mar its harmony; and he therefore beseeches both of these good women to end their quarrel, and to “be of the same mind in the Lord.” You cannot tell what hurt may come to a church through two members being at enmity against each other. They may be unknown persons, they may be Christian women, but they can work no end of mischief; and therefore it is a most desirable thing that they should speedily come together again in peace and unity.

*3. And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.*

He tenderly thinks of all those who had helped the work of the Lord, and, in return, he would have all of them helped, and kindly remembered, and affectionately cherished. May we always have this tender feeling towards one another, especially towards those who work for the Lord with us! May we ever delight in cheering those who serve our Lord!

*4, 5. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*

We have come to understand this word “moderation” in a sense not at all intended here. The best translation would probably be “forbearance.” Do not get angry with anybody; do not begin to get fiery and impetuous: be forbearing, for the Lord is at hand. You cannot tell how soon he may appear; there is no time to spare for the indulgence of anger; be quiet; be patient; and if there be anything very wrong, well, leave it. Our Lord Jesus will come very soon; therefore be not impatient.

*6. Be careful —*

That is, be anxious —

*6. For nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

See how the apostle would bid us throw anxiety to the winds; let us try to do so. You cannot turn one hair white or black, fret as you may. You cannot add a cubit to your stature, be you as anxious as

you please. It will be for your own advantage, and it will be for God's glory, for you to shake off the anxieties which else might overshadow your spirit. Be anxious about nothing, but prayerful about everything, and be thankful about everything as well. Is not that a beautiful trait in Paul's character? He is a prisoner at Rome, and likely soon to die; yet he mingles thanksgiving with his supplication, and asks others to do the same. We have always something for which to thank God, therefore let us also obey the apostolic injunction.

*7, 8. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

If there is any really good movement in the world, help it, you Christian people. If it is not purely and absolutely religious, yet if it tends to the benefit of your fellow-men, if it promotes honesty, justice, purity, take care that you are on that side, and do all you can to help it forward.

*9. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do:*

Paul was a grand preacher to be able to say that; to hold up his own example, as well as his own teaching, as a thing which the people might safely follow.

*9. And the God of peace shall be with you.*

In the seventh verse, we had the expression, "the peace of God." In this ninth verse, we have the mention of "the God of peace." May we first enjoy the peace of God, and then be helped by the Spirit of God to get into a still higher region, where we shall be more fully acquainted with the God of peace!

*10. But · rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.*

"I rejoiced." So Paul was himself in a happy mood; these saints in Philippi had sent to him in prison a gift by the hand of one of

their pastors, and Paul, in his deep poverty, had been much comforted by their kind thoughtfulness about him.

**11.** *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

That was not an easy lesson to learn, especially when one of those states meant being in prison at Rome. If he was ever in the Mamertine, those of us who have been in that dungeon would confess that it would take a deal of grace to make us content to be there; and if he was shut up in the prison of the Palatine hill, in the barracks near the morass, it was, to say the least, not a desirable place to be in. A soldier chained to your hand day and night, however good a fellow he may be, does not always make the most delightful company for you, nor you for him; and it takes some time to learn to be content with such a companion; but, says Paul, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

**12.** *I know both how to be abused, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

These are both hard lessons to learn; I do not know which is the more difficult of the two. Probably it is easier to know how to go down than to know how to go up. How many Christians have I seen grandly glorifying God in sickness and poverty when they have come down in the world; and ah! how often have I seen other Christians dishonouring God when they have grown rich, or when they have risen to a position of influence among their fellow-men! These two lessons grace alone can fully teach us.

**13.** *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

What a gracious attainment! There is no boasting in this declaration; Paul only spoke what was literally the truth.

**14, 15.** *Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.*

The Philippians were the only Christians who had sent any help to this great sufferer for Christ's sake in the time of his need.

**16-18.** *For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.*

I do not suppose that they sent him very much; but he knew the love that prompted the gift, he understood what they meant by it. I always had a fancy that Lydia was the first to suggest that kind deed. She, the first convert of the Philippian church, thought of Paul, I doubt not, and said to the other believers, "Let us take care of him as far as we can. See how he spends his whole life in the Master's service, and now he may at last die in prison for want of even common necessities; let us send him a present to Rome." How grateful is the apostle for that gift of love! What gladness they had put into his heart! Now he says: —

**19.** *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

"You have supplied my need out of your poverty; my God shall supply all your need out of his riches. Your greatest need shall not exceed the liberality of his supplies."

**20, 21.** *Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.*

The religion of Christ is full of courtesy, and it is full of generous thoughtfulness. I do not think that he can be a Christian who has no knowledge nor care about his fellow church-members.

**21.** *The brethren which are with me greet you.*

They saw that he was writing a letter, and they therefore said, "Send our love to the Philippians."

**22.** *All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.*

Only think of saints in the household of Nero, saints in the service of such a demon as he was, and saints who were first in every good thing: "Chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."

**23.** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

## **PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9**

**1.** *Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*

It is a great joy to a minister, as it was to the apostle Paul, to have converts; but that joy is greatly diminished when they do not stand fast: then, indeed, every supposed joy becomes a sorrow, and instead of the roses which yield a sweet perfume to the Lord's servant, thorns begin to prick and wound his heart.

**2.** *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.*

Only two women, and we do not know who they were; yet Paul gives them a "beseech" each: "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." If there are only two of the most obscure sisters in the church who are quarrelling, their differences ought to be brought to an end at once. There should be no disagreements amongst Christians, love should reign, peace should predominate. If there is anything contrary to such a state as that, God grant that it may soon be brought to an end!

**3.** *And I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.*

Brother, do all the good you can to help everybody else to do good. Help those whose names are in the book of life, even if they are not known anywhere else. Also help the "Clement" whose name is known; be sure to help him; indeed, help everybody. There is an office, in the Church of Christ, which we do not sufficiently recognize; but which ought to be abundantly filled. Paul mentions it in writing to the Corinthians. He says, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." It is the office of certain Christians to be "helps." May we always have many such "helps" amongst us! Did you ever notice that, almost every time that Bartholomew is mentioned in Scripture, we read, "and Bartholomew"? He is never spoken of alone; but it is written, "Philip, and Bartholomew," or "Bartholomew, and Matthew." It is good to have some Bartholomews who are always helping somebody else, so that, when

there is any good work to be done, Bartholomew is always ready to share in it; for he shall also have a part in the reward at the last.

**4.** *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*

The very word “rejoice,” seems to imply a reduplication; it is joy, and re-joy, joy over again; but here, you see, it is a fourfold rejoicing; joy, and re-joy; and again I say, joy, and re-joy; and this is to be the Christian’s continual experience, for the apostle says, “Rejoice in the Lord always.”

**5, 6.** *Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

Have no care, but much prayer. Prayer is the cure for care. If you are in trouble, “Let your requests be made known,” not to your neighbors, but “unto God.”

**7, 8.** *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

Be on the side of everything that is good and right, everything that helps on true human progress, everything that increases virtue and purity. As a Christian man, take an interest in everything that helps to make men true, honest, just, pure, and lovely.

**9.** *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.*

May the Lord fulfill that gracious word to all of us, “The God of peace shall be with you”! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 JOHN 4 AND PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9.

# COLOSSIANS

## COLOSSIANS 1

**1-2.** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul begins with a salutation in which he wishes the Colossian Christians the best of all blessings. It is the very spirit of our holy religion to wish well to others, and I am sure that we cannot have a better wish for our dearest friends than this, "Grace be unto you, and peace." Grace will save you; peace will make you know that you are saved. Grace is the root of every blessing; peace is the sweet flower that makes life so sweet and so fragrant. May you have both of these blessings "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"! There is no peace for you apart from this blessed combination, God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, may you know your adoption, and may you know your redemption!

**3, 4.** *We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus,*

We are not only to pray for those who have no faith, but the very fact that men have faith should lead us to pray for them. Where there is evidently life in the seed, and it begins to sprout, let us water it with our prayers, and with our thanks, too. "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus," —

**4, 5.** *And of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is, laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;*

"Faith" — "love" — "hope" — these are three divine sisters, which should ever go hand in hand. We must never be satisfied unless we see in ourselves and in our fellow-Christians these three delightful fruits of the Spirit of God. Notice the order here, — faith, and love, and then hope. Perhaps the Colossians were a little

deficient in this last grace, so the apostle prayed constantly for them, “for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”

**6.** *Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:*

We do not know the grace of God in truth unless it brings forth fruit in us. We may know it with the head very correctly, but yet we do not truly know it unless it is knowledge in the heart, knowledge in the inner man. We do not really know it unless it affects our lives, and brings forth faith love, hope; — faith, which lifts us above the world; love, which preserves us from selfishness; and hope, which keeps us up under all trials.

**7, 8.** *As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.*

I like to read of these godly men speaking well of one another. Nowadays, it is thought to be a distinguishing mark of faithfulness to be able to pick holes in the coats of our fellow-Christians. Now, we cannot help perceiving their defects, and sometimes it is our duty to speak of them, and to speak of them faithfully, but let us also observe all the virtues that are to be found in them otherwise we may despise the work of the Holy Spirit, and rob him of his glory. How kindly Paul speaks of Epaphras, and how kindly Epaphras speaks of the church at Colosse!

**9.** *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*

If you have the graces of the Spirit, it is important that they should be deepened, that they should grow through being fed with divine nourishment. What the water is to the plant, making it further to develop itself, that is the knowledge of God’s will to our gifts and graces; they grow and become fruitful through an increase in the knowledge of God.

**10-14.** *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious*

*power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

Now the apostle is handling the string he most delights to touch. He is at home with everything which concerns the welfare of saints; but when he begins to talk of his Lord and Master, then it is that he seems to ride in a chariot of fire with horses of fire, and he grows mightily eloquent under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. See how he talks of the great central truth of the atoning sacrifice: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

**15-18.** *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth; visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body,*

Note how Paul harps upon that one string, "He." See how much he dwells upon the divine person of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. He will never have done praising him, he keeps on heaping up epithets to magnify that blessed name; and he truly was in the Spirit of God when he did this, for it is the work of the Spirit to glorify Jesus Christ. He makes him great in our hearts, and then we try to make him great by our words and by our acts.

**18-22.** *The church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight:*

O beloved! as the sun is to be seen mirrored, not only in the face of the great deep, but in every little drop of dew that hangs upon

each blade of grass, so is the glory of Christ to be seen, not only in his universal Church, but in every separate individual in whom his Spirit has wrought holiness.

**23.** *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;*

How delighted he is to have such a gospel to preach, such a hope to tell out to the sons of men! Oh, if we had to creep from a sick bed, or to come up from a dungeon, if we were aching in every bone of our body, and if we were depressed in soul, this ought to be enough to make us full of gladness to overflowing, that we have such a Christ to preach, and such fullness of blessing to declare to the sons of men!

**24.** *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*

As if there were so much suffering to be endured to bring in the redeemed from the world, and so much self-sacrifice to be made in order that those whom Christ has redeemed may come to know of that redemption, and may be brought to him, and Paul was glad to make up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, “for his body’s sake, which is the church.” —

**25.** *Whereof I am made a minister,*

This is a wonderful expression, “made a minister.” The true minister is of God’s making; a man-made minister must be a poor creature, but a God made minister will prove his calling: “whereof I am made a minister,” —

**25-27.** *According to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

“Christ in you” is glory begun, a sure pledge and earnest of a glory greater than you can yet conceive. If Christ be in you, you

have the beginnings of heaven; you have, in fact, the excellence and flower of heaven, for there is no heaven but the glory of Christ.

**28, 29.** *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

If God's people strive mightily, it is because God works mightily in them. Nothing can come out of a man but what God puts into him. We work to will and to do when he works in us according to his good pleasure. Oh, for more of the agonizing of the Spirit within us, that there might be more of agonizing in our spirits for the glory of God!

## **COLOSSIANS 1**

**1, 2.** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Kindness is the very breath of Christianity, so the apostle will not begin the subject matter of his letter until first of all he has breathed out a benediction upon those to whom he writes.

**3.** *We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,*

Paul very graciously blends his giving of thanks and his constant prayer for these Christians at Colosse, and therein sets us an example that we may well imitate.

**4-6.** *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:*

If there is a way of knowing the grace of God which is of no value, it is when it is not known in truth, that is to say, when it is only head-knowledge, not heart-knowledge. But, oh, when in truth the grace of God sinks into the soul, and changes the whole nature, then it is an experience for which we may well give thanks to God.

**7, 8.** *As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.*

Epaphras told them of Paul's prayers for them; and when he came back from Colosse, he told Paul of their great love in the Spirit.

**9.** *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in his wisdom and spiritual understanding,*

See! the apostle asks for them something more even than faith, and hope, and love, — that they “might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” This shows what a valuable thing it is to know and understand the will of God.

**10, 11.** *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;*

If we have faith, and hope, and love, it is desirable that we add to these a fullness of knowledge, and to this holiness of life and fruitfulness of service that we may have patience to endure the afflictions of this life, and longsuffering with which to put up with the provocations of the ungodly.

**12-14.** *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

And now Paul, having mentioned his Master's great work, — redemption by blood and the forgiveness of sins — goes on at a tangent, as it were. He is so enthusiastic with regard to Christ and his great atoning sacrifice that the very thought of Christ's blood stirs his own blood, and he seems like a man all on fire with holy fervor as he writes: —

**15-17.** *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by*

*him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

How can anyone ever read this passage, and yet say that Christ Jesus is only a man? By what twisting of words on such language as this be applied to the most eminent prophet or apostle who ever lived? Surely he must be God by whom all things were created, and by whom all things consist. But Paul's next sentence is to us the sweetest of all: —

**18.** *And he is the head of the body, the church:*

He is joined by an indissoluble union to his people, and is the head of their glory, their wisdom, and their strength.

**18.** *Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

Are we giving him the pre-eminence in all things? That theology must be false which puts Jesus in the second place, or even lower than that, and that experience is a wrong one which does not put Christ always in the front. He must in all things always stand first.

**19.** *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;*

That we might have to go to him for it; it pleased the Father to make errands for us so as to take us to Christ, and to make our very emptiness thus to minister to the glory of Christ.

**20-23.** *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled,*

This is a text that ought to be read and pondered every day by the many unstable professors who are in the church at this present time: "if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled," like a building that will have no further settlements, no more starting of the stones, no more cracking of the walls, because your foundation is secure, and you are firmly built upon it.

**23, 24.** *And be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is*

*under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a minister; who now rejoice in my sufferings for you,*

Oh how blessed it is when a man has so mastered himself that his sufferings for his fellow-Christians become a matter of rejoicing for himself! He not only accepts them, and bears them with patience, but he says: —

**24.** *And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*

There is nothing “behind” as to the atoning efficacy of the sufferings of Christ, but there is much yet to be endured in order that all the elect may be brought to Christ. Some must suffer through their extraordinary labours in preaching the gospel, others through bearing reproach for the truth's sake, and Paul was glad to take, in his mortal body, his share of the sufferings to be endured for the sake of Christ's Church, which is his mystical body.

**25-27.** *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the world of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ is you, the hope of glory.*

This is the most blessed of all mysteries, I trust that many of us understand it; may the Holy Ghost reveal it to any who know it not!

**28.** *Whom we preach, —*

That is, Christ; it is not so much what we preach as whom we preach. We preach the person of Christ: “whom we preach,” —

**28, 29.** *Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

There will never be any mighty work come from us unless there be first a mighty work in us, no man truly labours for souls unless the Holy Ghost has first wrought mightily in him.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:1-19**

**1-14.** *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ*

*which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth: as ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

As we read these words, we cannot help noticing how positively the apostle speaks. There are no “hope so’s,” “trust so’s,” and “ifs,” and “buts”; but it, is all, “it is so,” and “it is so.” And, beloved brethren, concerning eternal matters, nothing but certainties will suffice for us. Allow uncertainties about your estates if you will, but we must have positive assurance concerning eternal things; and nothing short of this ought to content our spirits. Can we all say, as we listen to these words, “God hath delivered us from the power of darkness; he hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins”?

**15.** *Who is the image of the invisible God,—*

Admire this delightful passage, in which the apostle seems to burn and glow while he describes his Lord and Master: “who is the image of the invisible God,”—

**15-19.** *The firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him,, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.*

Blessed be his glorious name! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 14:1-12: AND COLOSSIANS 1:1-19.

## **COLOSSIANS 2**

**1.** *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;*

Paul had not met these Colossian Christians, but he had heard of their faith, and hope, and love, and he so desired their good that he had a continual care for them in his heart. He carried that care to God in prayer, yet he still bore them in loving remembrance. They were always on his heart as a sick child is ever on the heart of its mother.

**2, 3.** *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.*

In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He wanted them to know God, and to rest comforted and happy in what he revealed. He saw in them a tendency to look abroad for something more than that, a desire to tack something else on to the gospel, a wish to try and find some fresh light outside the Word, and over this he greatly grieved. He himself was more than satisfied with the gospel, and he wanted them to be, in that respect, as he was.

**4.** *And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.*

They did not openly contradict the gospel, they pretended to have a great affection for it, and then they tried to tear the very heart out of it with their enticing words of man's wisdom.

*5. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.*

He never forgot them; and it was his joy when he found them standing fast in Christ, and his sorrow and his horror when they went away after anyone else.

*6. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

“Do not turn away from him, do not dream of going beyond him. You received him at first very simply, you trusted in him entirely, so go on doing so. You were satisfied with Christ when you first came to him, so be satisfied with him still, for you do not need anything more than Christ, and there is nothing more than Christ.”

*7. Rooted and built up in him,*

“Take a living hold of Christ as a tree does of the soil. Be also built up in him; as a building settles down upon the foundation, so do you settle down upon Christ.”

*7. And stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

When a man is established in the truth that he knows, and rejoices in what he has already received, he will not go away from it.

*8. Beware lest any man spoil you*  
(plunder you, it might be rendered,)

*8. through philosophy and vain deceit,*

“Beware of those who pretend that they are going to enrich you, but whose real object is to plunder you. They say that they will give you advanced thought, deeper ideas, a system more congruous with the age; but it is” —

*8. After the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

“What do you want with their traditions? Christ has revealed his truth to you. What do you want with the world's rudiments? You

have gone beyond such elementary, useless knowledge as that, for you have got the truth itself.”

**9.** *For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

In Christ, we enter into the fullness and completeness of life both materially and spiritually.

**10, 11.** *Which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;*

“The Jew boasts that he is a circumcised man, but you have spiritually all that circumcision meant literally. Even though you have not wounded your flesh, you have more than that, for you have the death of the flesh and your very flesh has been buried with Christ. All that circumcision can possibly mean you have in Christ.”

**12.** *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

“You have death, burial, and resurrection, all in Christ; and you received the outward sign and token of this when you were baptized, so believe firmly that it is so, and do not look anywhere else for it. You are neither dead nor buried apart from Christ, nor are you driven apart from him all you have is in him.”

**13.** *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.*

“You do not need to go to a ‘priest’ for pardon, for Christ has forgiven you all your trespasses. You are so complete in Christ that confession to man and priestly absolution from man would be of no use to you.”

**14.** *Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*

“All the Mosaic ceremonials, from which you were shut out as Gentiles, are abolished. Christ has driven a nail through them and fastened them up to his cross.” As, sometimes, a banker stamps through a cheque when it is paid, so has Christ but through the very heart of all Jewish ordinances by what he has done for his people.

**15.** *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

Exhibiting them as his prisoners in a triumphal procession, as the victorious Roman Generals did when they returned from war.

**16.** *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days;*

“Do not put yourselves under rules and regulations which God has not ordained. If you think it is right for you to abstain from certain drinks do so, but do not act thus simply because others do so. If you abstain from certain meats, because they have been offered to idols, and the consciences of others might be offended if you partook of them, do not act thus as though it would save you. Do not make yourself subject to the judgment of other men, for Christ is your Law-giver and Lord.”

**17.** *Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

“You can do without the shadow now that you have the substance; so keep to that.” Some men multiply church ordinances; they have this form and that form, well, let them have them if they find them of service; but do not you bring yourself under subjection to anything of the kind; follow the New Testament and above all things keep close to Christ, for he is everything to you.

**18.** *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility-*

We know those who say, “We do not know anything, we are only seekers, trying to find out the truth.” They talk very humbly considering how desperately proud they really are, but that humility which makes men doubt is mock humility, and is not of God. “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” When you have learned the truth from the Scriptures, be dogmatic about it, do not be afraid of the presumption of which venue will accuse you, or the bigotry which they will impute to you.

**18.** *And worship of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,*

Agnostics by their name confess that they do not know, but do not let them take away from you what you do know, and set you to investigate matters which are beyond you with a judgment which they would lead you to think is well nigh infallible, whereas your

judgment is very fallible indeed. Be not puffed up by your fleshly mind.

**19. *And not holding the Head,***

That is the point, these people get away from the Deity of Christ, they get away from the atoning blood, they get away from glorifying him who alone is the Truth.

**19. *From which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increased with the increase of God.***

Take away the head, and there is death, everything is out of order then. If the Head be denied, if any doctrine be taught which is contrary to the glory of Christ, you have killed the body however much you may pretend to be increasing and feeding it

**20-22. *Therefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances. (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which, all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?***

You may and you should feel that there are some things which you will not touch, or taste, or handle. You had better let poisonous drugs alone; but, at the same time, if any man seeks to impose upon you any regulation concerning them as a part of the faith, you may resist it and repudiate it, and plead your freedom in Christ.

**23. *Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship,-***

There were some of the Jews who would not eat certain kinds of meat, and others who would fast for long periods. Some thought it was very wicked to eat flesh meat on a certain day, and there were many such notions; and similar superstitions still survive among us, such as not eating meat on Fridays, being afraid of thirteen people sitting at table, and so on: but you have nothing to do with all that kind of rubbish so get away from it. If you are a believer in Christ, tread all such nonsense under your feet. "Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship," —

**23. *And humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour-***

There is no honour about such things, they are contemptible: "not in any honour" —

**23. *To the satisfying of the flesh.***

That is all such things would do, — make you seem better than other people; so do not be led into these ways, but stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made his people free.

### **COLOSSIANS 2:6-17**

**6.** *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

Do not go away from him. You have received him; keep to him. Whatever he was to you at first, let him be that to you to the very last. Do not begin with Christ, and then go back to self; let it be all Christ from first to last.

**7.** *Rooted and built up in him,*

Growing in him. Have your very life, like a tree, rooted in Christ; and like a temple, built up in Christ.

**7.** *And stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein, with thanksgiving.*

Do not forget what you have been taught; do not reject it; keep to it. He who should learn one system of philosophy, and then unlearn it, and begin another, and then unlearn that, and begin another, would be more likely to turn out a fool than a philosopher; and he who begins to learn the faith in one way, and then tries to learn it in another way, and then attempts to learn it in yet another way, is more likely to be a skeptic than to be a saint.

**8.** *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

Plenty of people would spoil you in this way, by teaching you their profound thoughts, their grand inventions, their bright ideas. Beware of all of them.

**9.** *For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

Everything, then, must be in Christ if all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him. Why do you want to go anywhere else for wisdom? What can you find by going elsewhere? “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

**10.** *And ye are complete in him,*

You are like vessels filled up to the brim. You are like warriors thoroughly furnished, fully armed for the fight: "Ye are complete in him."

**10, 11.** *Which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:*

All that the Jew ever had you have in Christ, only you have the real purification of which his rite was but a symbol.

**12.** *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

It is only as you are one with Christ that baptism will be to you what he intended; but "buried with him in baptism," you are dead to all beside, and all your life lies in him.

**13.** *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision, of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him,*

All your life is in Christ; you are "quickened together with him."

**13.** *Having forgiven you all trespasses;*

Your pardon is given to you in Christ. Oh, how full and how free is that forgiveness that comes to you through Christ Jesus!

**14, 15.** *Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

His cross was his triumph. Then he led captivity captive. What more do you want? Your enemy is vanquished, your sins blotted out, your death changed to life, your necessities all supplied. Will you not stay at home with Christ? "Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?" Canst thou have a better lover than thy Lord, a dearer husband than the heavenly Bridegroom? Oh, love the Lord, ye his saints; cling to him, and make much of him; let him be all in all to you!

**16.** *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:*

Do not let anybody come in, and tell you that it is necessary for your salvation that you should abstain from this meat or that drink,

that there is a merit in fasting for forty days in Lent, or that you cannot be saved without observing such and such a holy day. Your salvation is in Christ. Keep you to that, and add nothing to this one foundation which is once for all laid in him.

**17.** *Which are a shadow of things to come;*

That is all that they are: “a shadow of things to come.”

**17.** *But the body is of Christ.*

Christ is the real one thing needful. Mind that you have the substance, for then you can let the shadows go. May God bless to us all this brief reading of his Word!

### **COLOSSIANS 2:6-23**

**6.** *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: —*

That is, keep on as you began. Christ was enough for you when, as poor, guilty sinners, you came and trusted him; so keep on trusting him in the same way as you did at the first. Do not try to live by feeling, after having lived by faith. Do not begin to live upon outward forms and ceremonies after having found salvation by grace through faith: “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:”

**7.** *Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

Christians are to make progress in the heavenward road; but they are not to have any other foundation for their faith than they had at the beginning of their Christian career. We are still to stand fast as we stood at the first; we are to be rooted, grounded, “stablished in the faith,” keeping to the old truth that saved our souls, and laying hold upon the same Saviour with greater tenacity every hour of our lives. We are not to be like chaff driven before the wind,— for ever moving; but to be like the cedars of Lebanon, firmly rooted, and withstanding the heaviest storms.

**8.** *Beware lest any man spoil you —*

Or, “rob you”

**8.** *Through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

Cleave to Christ, beloved. Go no further than he leads you; and turn not away from him either to the right hand or to the left. In him are contained all the riches of grace, and all the treasures of knowledge. If you would become truly wise, seek to know more of the wisdom of God in Christ Jesus.

**9, 10.** *For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

You have everything in Christ that you ought to want; you are fully furnished, completely supplied and equipped for all future service. You need not go to Christ for the supply of some of your needs, and then go elsewhere for the supply of other needs; but, “ye are complete in him.”

**11.** *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:*

Anything good that there was in Judaism, you have secured to you in Christ. Whatever there was of blessing and privilege in the covenant mark in the flesh of those whom God made to be his people in the olden time, you have handed on to you by the death of Christ.

**12-15.** *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

The Lord Jesus Christ has done everything for his people, fought their battle, won their victory, and, on their behalf, celebrated the triumph in the streets of heaven, “leading captivity captive.” What more, then, do we want? Surely Christ is enough for us.

**16.** *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:*

Do not put yourself under the bondage of any rules and regulations that may be made by men. If you choose to do anything, or to abstain from something else, because you judge it to be right and beneficial, do so. Christ is your only Ruler and Leader; and if he does not command anything, let it not signify to you who does command, it,

**17.** *Which are a shadow of things to come;*

All this regard for meats, and drinks, and holy days, and new moons, is but a shadow; what is the great substance that is all-important?

**17, 18.** *But the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, —*

Do not be beguiled by those who tell you that you ought to pay reverence to angels, and saints, and I know not what besides. One day is called St. Matthew's, and another is St. Michael's, and one, I suppose, is St. Judas's day; there are all sorts of supposed saints, some of whom are never mentioned in the Bible, and about whom nobody ought to care at all: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels," —

**18-20.** *Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,—*

Such ordinances as these,—

**21, 22.** *(Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?*

I have actually seen this text quoted as though it stood as a matter of teaching,—“Touch not; taste not; handle not;”— whereas the apostle here means, “Why are ye subject to such ordinances of men when Christ has set you free from them all? If, with a view to the good of your fellowmen, you choose not to touch, or taste, or handle, you will act very wisely; but, as far as your own conscience is concerned, do not submit to any merely human regulations as to your manner of life,”

**23.** *Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.*

This exposition consisted of readings from COLOSSIANS 2: 6-23; AND 3:1-3.

### **COLOSSIANS 3 AND 4:1-4**

**1.** *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

Oh! how often we need to be called to this, for the flesh is groveling, and it holds down the spirit; and very often we are seeking the things below as if we had not yet attained to the new life, and did not know anything about the resurrection power of Christ within the soul. Now, if it be that you, believers, have risen with Christ, do not live as if you had never done so, but “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”

**2.** *Set your affection.*

Not “your affections.” Tie them up into one bundle. Make one of them.

**2.** *On things above, not on things on the earth.*

You say that you were dead with Christ, and that you have risen with Christ. Live, then, the risen life, and not the life of those who have never undergone this matchless process. Live above.

**3.** *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

The old life is dead. You are dead to it. You will not be consumed by it:

you cannot be controlled by it. You have a newer and higher life. Let it have full scope.

**4.** *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

Christ was hidden while he was here. The world knew him not. So is your life. But there is to be a glorious manifestation. When Christ is made manifest, so shall you be. Wait for him.

**5.** *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*

Since you are dead, let all the lusts of the flesh be put to death. Kill those.

They were once a part of you. Your nature lusted this way. Mortify them.

Do not merely restrain them and try to keep them under. These things you are to have nothing to do with.

**6, 7.** *For which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.*

“When ye lived in them” But now you do not live in them. You are dead to them. If it should ever come to pass that you fall into any of these things, you will loathe yourself with bitterest repentance that you could find comfort, satisfaction, life in them. You are dead to them.

**8-10.** *But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds: And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*

No lies. Such communications are filthy. But you put these things away through your union with Christ in his risen life. Therefore, abhor them.

Avoid the very appearance of them, and cry for grace to be kept from them, for you have been “renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”

**11.** *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*

In the new life there is no distinction of race and nationality. We are born into one family; we become members of Christ’s body; and this is the one thing we have got to keep up — separation from all the world beside: no separations in the church, no disunion, nothing that would cause it, for we are one in Christ, and Christ is all. Now, as we have to put off these things, that is the negative side: that is the law’s side, for the law says, “Thou shalt not” — “Thou shalt not.” But now look at the positive side.

**12.** *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering:*

This is what you have got to wear, even on the outside — to put it on; not to have a latent kindness in your heart, and a degree of humbleness deep down in your soul if you could get at it; but you are to put it on. It is to be the very dress you wear. These are the sacred vestments of your daily priesthood. Put them on.

**13.** *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

Just as readily, just as freely, just as heartily, just as completely.

**14-15.** *And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts.*

For that is the great foundation of every godly fruit. We are in such a hurry, in such dreadful haste, so selfish, so discontented, so impetuous, and the major part of our sins spring from that condition of mind. But if we were godly, restful, peaceful, how many sins we should avoid! “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.”

**15.** *To the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

It looks like a very small virtue to be thankful. Yet, dear friends, the absence of it is one of the grossest of vices. To be ungrateful is a mean thing: to be ungrateful to God is a base thing. And yet how many may accuse themselves of it! Who among us is as grateful as he should be? Be thankful.

**16.** *Let the word of Christ dwell in you.*

Alexander had a casket of gold studded with gems to carry Homer’s works. Let your own heart be a casket for the command of Christ. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you.”

**16-18.** *Richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

See how our being Christians does not relax the bonds of our Christian relationship, but it calls us to the higher exercise of the responsibilities and duties connected therewith.

**19.** *Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them.*

Oh! there are some spirits that are very bitter. A little thing puts them out, and they would take delight in a taunt which grieves the spirit. I pity the poor woman who has such bitterness where she ought to have sweetness: yet there be some such husbands.

**20-21.** *Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*

The duties are mutual. Scripture maintains an equilibrium. It does not lay down commands for one class, and then leave the other to exercise whatever tyrannical oppression it may please. The child is to obey, but the father must not provoke.

**22.** *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers;*

How much there is of that! How quickly the hands go when the master's eye looks on! But the Christian servant remembers God's eye, and is diligent always. "Not with eye service as men-pleasers."

**22-25.** *But in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons.*

## **COLOSSIANS 4:1-4**

**1-2.** *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*

See how he keeps putting that in — "Be ye thankful" — "with thanksgiving." Why, that is the oil that makes the machinery go round without its causing obstruction. May we have much of that thanksgiving.

**3, 4.** *Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

So the preacher of the gospel asks your prayers: and it is a part of the duties arising out of the relationship between Christian men

that those who are taught should pray for those who teach God's Word.

This exposition consisted of readings from COLOSSIANS 3; 4:1-4. PSALM 28:1-6.

### COLOSSIANS 3

**1,2.** *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

This is the best proof that we are really "risen with Christ," that we set our affection on things above.

**3-15.** *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

You notice that the apostle again and again speaks of what we have put off and what we have put on, or of what we are to put off and to put on: "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man." "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; . . . And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." Let the blessed girdle of

love bind upon you all these choice adornments of a true Christian's character.

**16, 17.** *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Now the apostle, guided by the Holy Spirit, gives injunctions concerning various family and domestic relationships:—

**18.** *Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

It is seemly according to nature; and it is still more “fit in the Lord.”

**19.** *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.*

Never say a bitter word against them; and, especially, never dishonour them in the household, before children or servants, as some have done; but do all that you can to manifest love and tenderness toward them.

**20.** *Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*

Nowadays, there are some children who seem to be at the head of the family, and the parents obey them in all things. This is very foolish and wrong; and when their children grow up, and become their plague and curse, they will bitterly lament their folly in putting things out of joint, and not keeping the house as God would have it kept, the children in their place, and the father in his.

**21.** *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*

Some fathers do; they expect more of children than they will ever get, and more than they ought to expect; and they lay heavy burdens upon them, which are grievous to be borne; and for little faults there are severe chastisements. This also is wrong.

**22-24.** *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

If you do all your work in that spirit, how noble it becomes, and how cheerfully you will get through it! You may have a master who is unworthy of your service; yet, if you “do it heartily, as to the Lord,” you will have rest of heart even in serving those who are froward and perverse, and the Lord will reward your service in due time.

**25.** *But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*

This exposition consisted of readings from Colossians 3 and 4:1-4.

### **COLOSSIANS 3:1-3**

**1** *If ye then be risen with Christ,—*

Leave all these outward rituals, and formalities, and ordinances of men, —

**1-3.** *Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

This exposition consisted of readings from COLOSSIANS 2: 6-23; AND 3:1-3.

### **COLOSSIANS 3:1-17**

**1.** *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

Your Lord and Master has gone up to heaven. You profess that he represents you, and that you have gone up there in him and with him. Then do not seek the things that are down here below, the things of earth; but live where your life has gone. Where your treasure is, there let your heart be also. “Seek those things which are above.”

**2, 3.** *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, —*

You profess to be dead to the world; is that profession false? You have observed that Scriptural ordinance in which you profess to be buried with Christ; was that observance only an empty form?

If there was any truth in your profession, “Ye are dead,” —

**3.** *And your life is hid with Christ in God.*

You have a new life now; it is up yonder, “where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” Do you not feel drawings upward? Are there no longings after the high and heavenly estate where Jesus is? Come, beloved, let your soul break loose for a while; and, like a lark that, having found its liberty, ascends with joyous wing, singing as it rises till it is out of mortal sight, so let it be with you.

4. *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

You are hidden now, your life is veiled in him; but, at his second coming he shall shine forth in all his glory, and “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” Beloved, seek no greatness here; ask not for any exaltation of yourself among the sons of men; but wait for your true manifestation with Christ in glory.

5. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*

Kill all these evil things; do not let them live in you for a single moment. The command applies, not only to the grosser actions which are summed up under the head of fornication and uncleanness, but to all that leads to those foul sins; not only to the fire, but also to the sparks, such as “inordinate affection,” a sort of softness which is seen in some persons, men and women, too, and which often leads to something far worse; —and “evil concupiscence,” the first desires towards that which is unchaste. God give us grace to kill these loathsome things at once, for if thoughts of evil are indulged, they soon become acts of evil, and then who knows how far we may go in the way of unholiness? Sin, if allowed to grow in the heart, will soon take gigantic strides, and come out in the life. Depend upon it, whenever a professing Christian goes into overt sin of the kind mentioned here, he does not do it on a sudden. The evil has long been festering and fomenting within his heart, or it would not have manifested itself thus. Oh! if he had only watched, and destroyed the thief ere he broke open the house, what a mercy it would have been! You notice that covetousness is put down with the most filthy sins, and it is described as idolatry. The desire to possess the goods that belong to others, the lust to get gain at any price, this is idolatry.

**6, 7.** *For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.*

This was true of the Colossians, and it was true of almost all those to whom Paul wrote, for these gross evils were scarcely regarded as sins in his time, so polluted had the nations become. I hope that, in the case of many now living, they have been preserved by Christian training from having walked even for a time in such sins.

**8.** *But now ye also put off all these; —*

Put them all off, like old clothes that are never to be worn again: “Put off all these;” —

**8.** *Anger, —*

It is hard work for some to pull that garment off, for it fits them so tightly. This burning coat of wrath will not readily come off; but the apostle's command is, “Put it off! Put it off!” It does not become a Christian to be an angry man.

**8.** *Wrath, malice,*

Christ will not live in a heart that harbors malice.

**8.** *Blasphemy, —*

Thank God that, if we ever wore that robe, we pulled it off long ago.

**8.** *Filthy communication out of your mouth.*

All talking that is of a dubious character must go. Anything which savours of corruption and defilement must be put away from every Christian.

**9.** *Lie not one to another, —*

In Paul's day, lying was thought to be a virtue unless the liar happened to be found out; in that case, it was considered wrong; but to lie through thick and thin, and to lie so dexterously as to deceive, was looked upon by an Oriental as an accomplishment of which he might be proud. So the apostle might well write, “Lie not one to another,” —

**9, 10.** *Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*

There is nothing false or untrue in God. God is true, and in him is no falsehood at all; and if you and I have really been renewed, as we profess to have been, we shall hate the very semblance of a lie, and our word will be as good as our bond.

**11.** *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*

Whenever you hear certain very wise brethren say, “Such-and-such a promise in the Bible is for Israel, not for the Gentiles,” do not you be misled in the least by their assertion; but just quote this text to them: “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” These distinctions all vanish when once we come to Christ; we are one in him, and every promise to believers is good to all who are in Christ Jesus, for “Christ is all, and in all.”

**12.** *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, —*

Be ready to feel for others; be very considerate of their needs. Look at others as if they were your kith and kin; if you and they are in Christ, they are indeed your kin, so put on kinned-ness, or ‘kindness,’ —

**12.** *Humbleness of mind, —*

Do not try to be a big man. He who thinks himself big has not yet learnt the true spirit of Christianity. Especially towards those who are sorrowful and sad, be pitiful, be kind, be humble.

**12.** *Meekness, —*

If others try to provoke you, do not be provoked by them; but be gentle and meek.

**12.** *Longsuffering; —*

Continue to put up with others, remembering the Lord’s longsuffering with you.

**13.** *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

Hear this, beloved, I pray you; especially those of you who have hot tempers, and have fallen out with one another. “Let not the sun

go down upon your wrath.” Remember how much Christ has forgiven you, and show a forbearing and forgiving spirit to others.

**14.** *And above all these things put on charity,* —  
Or, rather, “love,” —

**14.** *Which is the bond of perfectness.*

The perfect bond, the girdle that goes round, and keeps every other garment of virtue in its place.

**15.** *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body;*

Do not fall out with one another. You are called to peace, for you are cared in one body. Does one hand in the body fight with the other hand? Does the foot contend with the eye? Of course not, for they are in one body. So are you in one body with all your fellow-Christians, therefore lay aside all strife. I deeply deplore when I see Christians — and especially eminent Christians — contending with one another about minor matters of small account. Surely, almost anything ought to be borne before there should be public strife among members of the one body. God grant that such a state of things may speedily come to an end wherever it has existed! We have enough to do to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” without contending for our own dignity or honour.

**15.** *And be ye thankful.*

That is a nice little text, “Be ye thankful.” When you are grumbling at your plain food, put this as a sandwich between your bread and butter, “Be ye thankful.” When you are complaining of the East wind, just try if you cannot spell this little sentence, “Be ye thankful.” When you are murmuring about those sharp pains and that long sickness, this is the kind of tune for the little bird to whistle at your window, “Be ye thankful.” We have all much for which we ought to be thankful, however sad we may think our lot to be. Look on the bright side, rejoice in God: “Be ye thankful.”

**16, 17.** *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Do not draw any line of demarcation, and say, "So far is secular, and so far is religious." Let your whole life be religious; and if there is anything proposed to you, in which you cannot glorify God, do not touch it. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." If any of you go to the theater, can you go there in the name of the Lord Jesus? Why, you would not dare to cross the threshold with such blasphemy in your soul! And when you go to any place of doubtful amusement, can you go there giving thanks to God and the Father by Jesus Christ? Can you thank the Lord that you are permitted to go, and pray for divine blessing when you go, and when you come away? A lady once said to a Christian minister, "The pleasures of going to the play are very great; there is the pleasure of thinking of it beforehand, the enjoyment of it at the time, and then the pleasure of thinking of it afterwards." "Yes, madam," said the good man, "and there is one other pleasure which you seem to have forgotten, that is the pleasure of thinking of it on your dying bed; I would like you to remember that." Let me read this verse again: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." If you cannot do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, do not do it at all if you are a Christian; and even if you are not a Christian, you will be accountable to God, by-and-by, for all that you do.

#### **COLOSSIANS 4:1-4**

1. *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal;*—

I sometimes think that the good men who chopped the Bible up into chapters—for it is not in chapters in the original,—must have hoped that we should not read this message to the masters, as he had put it in another chapter. But I never like to read about the servants without also reading about the masters. There is six for one, and half-a-dozen for the other; and, as is usual, in the Scriptures, there are balanced duties. If there is an exhortation to the children, there is generally one to the parents close by; and if there is a word to wives, there is one for husbands, too. So let us read that verse, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal;—

**1-4.** *Knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

This exposition consisted of readings from Colossians 3 and 4:1-4.



# 1 THESSALONIANS

## 1 THESSALONIANS 1

*1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul is very full of Christ. His heart is full of love to God our Father, and, therefore, it is that twice over in as many lines he mentions both names. He uses no vain repetitions, as the heathen do; but his inmost soul is taken up with communion with the Father and with the Son; and so in one single verse he twice gives us their names.

*2-4. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.*

Paul had a very high opinion of the Church in Thessalonica, and no doubt it deserved it. See how he speaks of it — with such confidence. “Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.” Their character was such that he felt sure that he saw the mark of God’s elect about them, and he speaks most positively of them — perhaps more positively than he does of any other church. Well, there were three grand signs. There was the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope; and where we see three works of the Spirit we may be fully persuaded that electing love is there.

*5. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.*

Paul never had a happier time in preaching, it would seem, than when he preached to these Thessalonians. He felt a power resting upon him. He spoke the gospel with great positiveness and assurance, and consequently the people received it in power, and the assurance of the hearer made the assurance of the speaker. It is a great mercy when it is so.

*6. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:*

Ah! dear friends, we read of one that he was more honourable than his brethren because his mother bore him with sorrow. And so when faith is born in the heart in the midst of affliction, it is a very precious faith. It is faith indeed. "Having received the Word in much affliction with joy." I seem to see that joy of theirs floating, like Noah's ark, above the floods of their affliction. It seems to be a contradiction that we can be in affliction and yet be full of joy. But many a believer will tell you that there is no contradiction in it. He knows what it is to be sorrowful, and yet to be always rejoicing.

*7. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.*

Brethren, let us not only be Christians, but let us be samples of Christians. They are sure to pick out the best for a sample. Oh! that we might be such that, if God himself were to select Christians to show what they are like, he might select us to be samples.

**8-10.** *For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

Paul here states that all the churches abroad knew what a wonderful time he had had with the Thessalonians, and with what alacrity they had received the gospel, and how they had turned away from their idols in thorough earnest to become worshippers of the living God. This was a great comfort to Paul, and he speaks about them here with great joy.

## **1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18**

**13.** *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

You cannot help sorrowing, for you miss your dear ones so much; but you do not sorrow like the heathen who believe their departed friends to be extinct and annihilated. You have a glorious hope concerning those who have fallen asleep in Christ, you believe that they are still live, and that, by-and-by, their bodies will rise again.

**14.** *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

There is such a union between Christ and his people that they never can be divided from him. In life, they live in him, in death, they sleep in him; and when he comes again, he will bring them with him. Christ cannot be without his people. A head without a body would be a ghastly thing, and Christ without his people would be incomplete and imperfect.

**15.** *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*

We shall have no preference over the saints who are sleeping in Jesus, we shall not go before them, we shall be on a blessed equality with them.

**16, 17.** *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

Whatever ideas we have concerning the details of Christ's coming, this summing up of the whole matter is unutterably precious to us: "so shall we ever be with the Lord." There is no separating Christ and his people. If you are one with him, he will not be in heaven and leave you behind; nor will he be glorified in the presence of his Father without making you to be partakers of the glory. What joy there is for us in this blessed truth!

**18.** *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18; AND 5.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 5

**1, 2.** *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

The great point is that it comes — will certainly come, and it will come when it is least expected. There are certain signs given, by which the righteous shall know of its appearing, but all study of dates and fixing of the time is contrary to the very spirit of the Christian dispensation. We are to abide, always looking for it, believing it may come today, believing it may not come today — believing that the secret of the time is with God. Ye do err if ye say it shall be this or that season; ye equally err if ye say it shall not be then. Let it remain as it is, a secret in the heart of God, ye yourselves always girt, waiting it to come.

**3.** *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

Sudden and acute shall be the terror of the ungodly when the Lord Jesus in flaming fire shall be manifested.

**4.** *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

You are brought out of darkness into his marvelous light. Your element is light. “Ye are all the children of light”; “ye are not in darkness that the day should overtake you as a thief.” You know the signs, and, being watchful, you will observe them when the hour cometh.

**5, 6.** *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

It is the proper and fitting season for it. That the children of darkness should slumber is no wonder. They are the children of a sleepy time. Ye are the children of the day; if ye sleep, ye will be acting contrary to your nature.

**7.** *For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.*

People were a little more decorous in the Apostle’s day than they are now, for there are some who are drunk in the day now-a-

days, and though we have certainly improved in some things, we seem to have gone back in this. But, at any rate, drunkenness may seem suitable to benighted persons, but it is not suitable to those who profess to have the light of God's grace.

**8.** *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.*

We are of the day, but it is a day of battle. Put on armor, therefore. Be as soldiers that are covered with a panoply. Especially take care of your heart — put on the breastplate. Faith and love are the sacred protection for this. Take care that ye have both. Take care of your head — that also is a vital part; put on the helmet. Hope will do that. A good hope in Christ Jesus will guard you from many violent attacks that will be made upon your judgment.

**9.** *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*

See there is no ordination to condemnation. Believing in Christ, we have the evidence that we are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the spirit and obedience, and sprinkling of blood.

**10, 11.** *Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.*

It is a good church of which we can say this, especially if we can say it of all the members that they edify one another. Living stones in a living temple should seek to build each other up. May we all try to have a sacred commerce in our knowledge, and other gifts as one trading with another. All may enrich and edify one another. "As also ye do." Why did he tell them to do it, then, if they were doing it? Answer — that they might keep on doing it. The horse that runs best may still be the better for a spur.

**12, 13.** *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.*

Consider them in your prayers; give them all the help you can; do not be strangers to their office, and to the burden which it brings. God has set them over you. Regard them in that light. Esteem them

very highly, not as masters, as though they were lords, but as being over you. "Esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake."

**13. *And be at peace among yourselves.***

There is an end to church prosperity when there is an end of peace.

**14. *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly,***

There are some that never will be ruled; their very idea of being a Christian is that they shall do just as they like. It is a somewhat happy circumstance that there are sects where they can do so. There are formed now-a-days these little knots of people who will have no rule and church government, and who meet to edify one another. Though they speedily go to pieces, it is perhaps the better for the churches that they are quit of them.

**14. *Comfort the feeble-minded,***

They want cheering. You needed it once; return the benefit you have received. Do not be out of patience with them for being so foolish. If their minds be feeble, you cannot expect much better from them.

**14. *Support the weak,***

Give them something to cling to. As some climbing plants put out their tendrils and need to be helped up, so may you be a prop to these climbers.

**14. *Be patient toward all men.***

Think of what patience God has with you. "Be patient toward all men."

**15. *See that none render evil for evil unto any man;***

Not in any case. The world advises you to pay a man in his own coin, but if he pays you bad coin, he is wrong, and if you pay him bad coin there will be two wrongs. Do not do so.

**15, 16. *But ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore.***

You have always something to rejoice in; make the world ring with Christian music.

**17. *Pray without ceasing.***

Praise and prayer are fit companions. You will soon leave off rejoicing if you leave off praying. By ejaculations, keep up your

prayers while at your books. You will not disturb your avocations by continuing still in supplication and prayer. That provender hinders no man's journey.

**18.** *In every thing give thanks:*

Try to do so for everything, and if you cannot do it, in everything give thanks for something else — when you are in circumstances which do not excite your thankfulness just then.

**18.** *For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

God wills it. This moved the Crusaders to the war. Let this suffice to move you in thanksgiving.

**19.** *Quench not the spirit.*

Do not hinder his movements in yourself; do not try to hinder them in others. If any man hath a gift which he might use to edification, do not discourage him, but rather encourage him to get more grace. God may find him opportunities of making use of it. Quench not the Spirit.

**20.** *Despise not prophesyings.*

If they are vain and false, despise them if you will, but that prophecy especially which deals with the Word of God, for the Word here does not signify merely prophecies of the future — it is often used of regular preaching. Despise not anyone who speaks in God's name. He may speak with blunders of grammar — forget them; if he be correct in his teaching of divine truth, if he speaks to your heart, if he warns you, if he warns under the Spirit of God, never despise him.

**21.** *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*

That first sentence is got to be quite a proverb, but that last, I believe, is taken away, which is another instance of the common truth that half the truth is a lie. You must give it all or none. "Prove all things," is mischievous teaching, unless you "hold fast that which is good." And, after all, in the very first sentence it is not so much "Prove all things," as "Prove all things" — that is, take nothing on trust. Do not believe it because you are told so. Search the Scriptures; test what you have received, but when you have tested it, do not go about to be for ever proving it. Hold it fast; grip it; grapple it to you as an ox to the stall. Hold fast that which is good.

**22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil.***

By which is not meant as some read it, “from everything that somebody likes to say looks like evil.” This would be to mar the Christian liberty. But wherever evil puts in an appearance, when it appears to be good, when it has been dressed out — for the word may refer to a Roman spectacle, or grand procession. Avoid evil even when dressed out in its best, when it comes on in all its gallant show to attract you. Avoid every species and kind of evil — that might almost be the translation — abstain from it altogether.

**23. *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

In the Christian man there is a trinity. His nobler nature is that which he got when he was regenerated, and it is his spirit. His soul he has got, in common with other men. His body he has in common with animals. All, however, must be fully consecrated to God. I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**24. *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.***

What a word of good cheer that is. Sanctification often seems to be a thing far off, but he will do it. He that called will perfect. The work which his wisdom began, the arm of his strength will complete.

**25. *Brethren, pray for us.***

Because sometimes people think that those of high spiritual attainments do not need their prayers, Remember, if they have a higher position, they have greater dangers.

**26. *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.***

This was the token of friendship in the East. To attempt to import it to the West would be not only absurd, but wicked. I may properly read them, “Greet all the brethren with a hearty shake of the hand; keep up the outward form of fellowship, for if you don’t you will soon forget the fellowship itself.” The kiss was the Oriental custom; it was to be kept up. The shake of the hand is our Western custom. Let it be kept up. And I delight to see it when Christians meet, and cordially greet each other after the custom of their land.

*27. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.*

The Pope would charge you that it be read to nobody; but who is he? It seems that this Epistle was intended to be read by all the Church, and so also the whole Bible. It is said it is not safe to trust it with the brethren; it is not safe to trust them without it; it is not safe to keep back God's Word from any man. Let the whole Book be read, and I am sure the mere read the better, especially if the last verse be true of every reader.

*28. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

### **1 THESSALONIANS 5**

*1, 2. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

That is, most unexpectedly to an ungodly world. Even they who are watching for Christ's coming may be to some extent surprised at his appearing, as the most watchful person may be when the thief at last comes; but we shall not be taken altogether unawares. We shall be, at least in a measure, prepared for the coming of the Lord, but as for the world at large, it will be an awful and surprising visitation,

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*3. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

Let no ungodly man dream that he will escape. Apart from vital union to Christ, there will be no escaping for any one of us in that tremendous day of the Lord.

*4. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

You who truly know the Lord, you who are saved through his first coming, and are expecting his second coming, —

*5, 6. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others;—*

Night is the time for sleep, and we sleep best in the darkness; but if we have come into the daylight, if the Sun of Righteousness has

risen upon us, let us be wakeful, let us be watchful. When the sun is shining, it is not right that men should sleep: “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others;” —

**6, 7.** *But let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.*

Even in Paul’s day, drunkenness was a thing that seemed more at home in darkness than in the light. As for us, brethren, let us never be carried away by excess, — either drunkenness of body or inebriation of mind — for there is a drunkenness which abjures the cup, and yet is as gross an intoxication as the other is. We may be drunk with pride, or drunk with ambition, or drunk with wrath, or drunk with worldliness; but we are to avoid all these evils, because we are not now in the night, when these drunken fits might be in some sort of harmony with the surrounding darkness.

**8-10.** *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*

This seems to be a theme which the apostle constantly brings up, as though he could not help it, — that we are to live together with Christ. There lies your safety, brethren: “together with him.” If you could get away from him, you would go down to destruction; but “together with him” is the path of life, and safety, and perfection.

**11-13.** *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

So that these apostolic churches had a ministry set over them in the Lord, and they were commanded to know these labourers for the Master, to recognize them as appointed by God to their ministerial position, “and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.”

**14-26.** *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever*

*follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.*

That was the Oriental manner of greeting, and it means to us, "Greet all the brethren with a hearty shake of the hand." Such tokens of fellowship ought never to be forgotten among the followers of Christ.

**27, 28.** *I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18; AND 5.

## **1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-28**

**1, 2.** *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

It will be a great surprise to the wicked. It will take them at unawares. Just at that moment when they least expect it will Christ come; and as the thief comes to destroy and to kill, so will the coming of Christ be the death of their carnal ease — the destruction of their earthly hopes.

**3.** *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

A terrible text that "They shall not escape." They shall not escape by their own power or force or wisdom. They shall not escape even by the annihilation which they might well desire, but which shall not come to them. They shall not escape.

**4.** *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

You know that Christ will come. You expect the dissolution of this present state. To you therefore, it will come as one who calls at daytime. You cannot know the hour. You must not know it; but since you know that he will come, and come to your joy; and since you are in the light, you look with gladness to that coming.

**5, 6.** *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others;*

If we were children of the night, sleep is a proper occupation for the night; but as we are the children of the day, let us not sleep as others.

**6.** *But let us watch and be sober.*

Watchfulness and sobriety are appropriate duties for the day. To be ever serving our Lord with constancy, and to keep ourselves from the fascinations of the world which make men's minds drunk — may these two things be our daily care.

**7.** *For they that sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.*

There are a few who have reached to such a pitch of shameless idleness that they sleep in the day, and there are others who have come to such a state of debauchery that they are drunken in the day. But this is not the common way of things, nor even in the judgment of the most licentious of the world is this at all a proper state of things. "They that sleep sleep in the night. They that are drunken are drunken in the night." Let us who are of the day be sober, and let us of course be awake, but let us be more than awake, since watchfulness is here joined to wakefulness, and watchfulness in a soldier requires that his armor be on. So Paul pushes the parallel a little farther.

**8.** *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.*

Soldiers when they sleep put off their armor; but in the day when they are awake and on their guard they wear their armor, and are ready for the fray. See how much is involved in Christian wakefulness. God help us to carry out every virtue to its legitimate consequences, not to be wakeful after a fashion, but wakeful after God's fashion.

**9.** *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In making us children of light, he gave evidence that our appointment was for the light — that his eternal ordinances were that through the light of gospel grace we should enter into the light of eternal glory by and by. “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**10.** *Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*

They who have served their day and generation, when they sleep are not parted from their Lord. They become not the children of the darkness by that fact, for he died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him. Whether we are living here or living there, we shall still live together with him.

**11.** *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.*

The more of this the better. Christian people should constantly converse with one another for mutual edification.

**12, 13.** *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.*

You see, in the church of old they edified one another, but for all that they did not cast off God's ordinance of Christian ministry. There was rule in the church then as there should be now; and the apostle, when he speaks of this individual edification, this mutual instruction, does not forget to notice those who were the pastors of the flock. He says, “Know them which labour among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.”

**13.** *And be at peace among yourselves.*

How can a church prosper if it is not?

**14-16.** *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore.*

Here follows a string of Christian precepts a golden chain. “Rejoice evermore.”

**17-19.** *Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit.*

Do not despise his operations, either in yourselves or in your brethren. Do not quench him by neglect, much less by open opposition.

**20-22.** *Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

Not from that which other people choose to think evil, but from all real evil whatever it is — even from the very shadow that it casts and the shape which it assumes.

**23-26.** *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.*

Give one another a hearty shake of the hands. That is the western interpretation of the eastern form. Outward forms differ. The inward sense abides the same. Let brotherly love continue in a hearty friendliness among yourselves.

**27, 28.** *I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

# 2 THESSALONIANS

## 2 THESSALONIANS 1

**1, 2.** *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

All nations have their special forms of salutation, and this is the Christian's greeting to his fellow-Christians, "Grace unto you, and peace." How much there is in this prayer! "grace" — the free favor of God, the active energy of the divine power; and "peace" — reconciliation to God, peace of conscience, peace with all men. My brethren, what better things could I desire for you, and what better things could you wish for your best beloved friends than these, "Grace unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ?"

**3.** *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren,*

We do not feel this bond as much as we ought; we often feel ourselves bound to grumble and complain, but I question whether we think enough about being bound to praise God; and if we do not thank God as we ought for ourselves, it is little marvel if we are very slack in the duty of thanking him for others. Herein, then, let us imitate this devout apostle, and let us consider ourselves bound to thank God always for our brethren.

**3-7.** *As it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, —*

You will perhaps say that this command is more easily given than carried out; and yet, my brethren, the grace of God always

enables us to perform what the precept of God commands. “You who are troubled rest with us.” If you can get even a partial glimpse of the glory that is to follow your trouble, if you can see Christ suffering with you, and realize your union with him, if the blessed Spirit who pledges himself to be with all the Lord’s people, shall be with you, you will find it no hard thing thus to rest: “You who are troubled rest with us,” —

*7. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*

This rest, then, it seems, is to be given to us mainly when Christ shall come with his mighty angels.

**8, 9.** *In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*

I wonder what those persons, who say that it is not the duty of men to believe the gospel, make of this passage. Paul writes that those who “obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be punished with everlasting destruction.” Then, clearly, the gospel demands and commands man’s obedience, and those who will not believe it shall be punished, not only for their other sins, but for this as their chief and damning fault, that they will not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as set before them in the gospel of his grace.

**10.** *“Then he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe —*

Which passage means, I suppose, that as Christ will be admired in his own person, so his glory, reflected in all his children, will be a subject of admiration to the whole intelligent universe. The saints of God shall be so pure, so bright, such trophies of the Redeemer’s power to save, that he shall be admired in them. We know that, in God’s great temple of the universe, everything doth speak of his glory; and so, in the great spiritual temple of his Church, every separate saint shall show forth the glory of Christ.

**10, 11.** *(Because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Therefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:*

Ministers should be much in prayer for their people. When John Welsh's wife found him on the ground with his eyes red with weeping, and she found that he had been there supplicating by the hour together, she asked him what ailed him, and he replied "Woman, I have three thousand souls to care for, and I wot not how they all prosper; therefore must I wrestle with God for them all." Oh, that we felt more the weight of our ministry! It is, perhaps, the great fault of this age that so many, who do preach, yet preach with so little earnestness, and are not sufficiently alive to the value of immortal souls. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would make our ministry to be "the burden of the Lord" upon us!

*12. That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

This exposition consisted of readings from 2 THESSALONIANS 1, 2:1-4.

## **2 THESSALONIANS 1**

*1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians —*

Paul loved to associate his fellow-workers with himself when writing to his brethren and sisters in Christ. Although he had a superior experience to theirs, he put Silvanus, and Timothy, his own son in the faith, with him as his fellow-evangelists in writing to "the church of the Thessalonians" —

*1. In God our Father —*

What a wonderful expression! The Church is in God as God is in the Church, what a blessed dwelling-place for the people of God in all generations: "in God our Father" —

*1, 2. And the Lord Jesus Christ:s grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

This is the apostle's usual salutation when he is writing to a Christian church. When he is writing to a minister, it is "grace, mercy, and peace," for God's most prominent servants especially need great mercy on account of their heavy responsibilities and many shortcomings; but to the church Paul's greeting is, "Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

**3.** *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;*

What a kind of sacred network Christian love makes, intertwisting every believer in Christ with every other believer! "The love of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." Oh, that this might really be the case in all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ!

**4, 5.** *So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God,*

One of the clearest proofs of the judgment to come is to be found in the present sufferings of the saints through persecutions and tribulations; for if they, for the very reason that they love God, have to suffer here, there must be a future state and time for rectifying all this that is now so wrong.

**5-7.** *That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye do suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us,*

For us who believe in Jesus there is a long Sabbath yet to come, to be spent with the apostles and the other holy ones around the throne of God and of the Lamb, even as Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "where remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

**7-11.** *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, —*

The very people in whom Paul gloried, and over whom he rejoiced, were those for whom he continued still to pray; and he did well, for the highest state of grace needs preserving, and there is a possibility of going beyond the utmost height to which any have yet

attained. Hence Paul says, “Wherefore also we pray always for you,” —

**11, 12.** *That our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

## **2 THESSALONIANS 2**

**1, 2.** *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

Paul believed in the Second Coming of Christ, for he beseeches the brethren “by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He felt the power of this great truth. He often exhorts us to be watchful, because of the uncertainty of the time of that coming as far as we are concerned. But there were some who sprang up in his day, as in ours, who professed that they knew a great deal about the Second Advent, when it was to happen, and so on, and they began to foretell and to prophesy beyond what was really revealed of God. By this means, some persons were terrified, and others driven to a very foolish course of action. It would seem, from this Epistle, that some people forsook their daily calling, and on pretence of the near return of Christ, endeavored to live upon the alms of Christian people, instead of themselves working. Many, however, were shaken in mind; so Paul wrote to reassure and strengthen them: “That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.”

**3, 4.** *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the Son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

It has been usually thought that this passage alludes to the great apostasy of the Church of Rome, and, certainly, if there were a hue and cry raised for the culprit here described, one might well arrest

that apostasy upon suspicion. It may not, however, be the man of sin, or the son of perdition; it may be that general spirit which springs up again and again, one of the many anti-Christ's that were already in the world even in John's day. There are many such spirits that are constantly rising up, not outside the Church, there, we could deal with them, but inside the Church, using the words of truth, and the signs of truth to signify something far other than the truth of God. This is the great rock that threatens destruction. Oh, that God's Church might ever be kept from striking upon it! But there is this rock which would, if it were possible, wreck the very elect barque of Christ itself.

*5-7. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*

There was something that hindered the full development of anti-Christ in Paul's day. When that was taken out of the way, then would there be a fuller revelation of this sinful system.

*8-12. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

We will not attempt to explain all this in detail. It would be too much of a task for a mere exposition; but the Church has always to be on her guard against that which comes as an angel of light, but is really a spirit of darkness.

*13. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*

How the saints praise one another! How sweet is Christian fellowship! How we rejoice in the blessed love of God to his people when we are assailed by those who battle against his truth! Then is

the love of the brethren stronger than ever, and our faithfulness to God is largely increased. The apostle falls back upon the doctrine of electing love: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." And he admires the methods by which that love effects its purpose: "Salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Men are made holy by the Spirit of God, the holiness is that of life, and of the understanding. They attain to a belief of the truth, as well as to a practice of the divine commands. Oh, happy people who are ordained from the beginning unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth!

**14.** *Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

How the apostle loved the gospel! It was Christ's gospel, but Paul calls it, "Our gospel." He and his brethren had made it so completely their own, and it had become so much their own in contradistinction to "another gospel, which is not another," that he speaks of it with unction and joy: "He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**15.** *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*

"The things which we have handed out to you, which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." They had heard Paul preach; he had not only written to them; but he had also spoken to them; and he bade them treasure up what he had said, and what he had written, and hold it fast as for dear life. The apostle did not preach that which he afterwards left, as the ostrich leaves its eggs; but he watched over it, and he watched over the people who had heard it, anxious that the truth to which they had listened should prove in them to be the message of everlasting life. Oh, my dear hearers, are there not still some of you who have heard our gospel, to whom we have often and long spoken, and yet, notwithstanding, it has not yet been the message of eternal life to you though it has been to many others? God have mercy upon you, and yet bring you to the feet of Jesus! As for others who come to listen to the Word for the first time may it be the power of God unto salvation on the very first occasion of their hearing it, to the praise of God, and the glory of his Son!

**16, 17.** *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.*

I believe in an established Church, not established by acts of Parliament but stablished by the purpose and by the presence of God in the midst of it. Oh, to be a member of a Church stablished in every good word and work! Do you know God's Word? Seek to know it better still, try to strike your roots down deeply into this fruitful soil, suck out the divine nutriment of it, that you may grow so strong that none shall be able to tear you away from it. Have you begun to work for Jesus? May you be stablished in that good work! Go on working more and more, with both your hands and all your heart, that somehow you may glorify his blessed name. Let me read these sweet verses again: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

This exposition consisted of readings from 2 THESSALONIANS 2. And 3:1-5.

## **2 THESSALONIANS 2**

**1, 2.** *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

In the Church of Christ, the teaching has always been that Christ is coming quickly, and that teaching must never be withdrawn, for he is coming quickly, as he said to John in the Revelation. At the same time, this teaching has given an opportunity to certain presumptuous people to prophesy that at such and such a time Christ will come. They know nothing about it, and their prophecies are not worth the breath they spend in uttering them, and we have today what the apostle wrote to the Thessalonians: —

**3.** *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

I believe that, to a large extent, this has already happened, and that the "man of sin" has been revealed. This "son of perdition" has

had a long, dark, and terrible reign over myriads of men, and still he sitteth on the seven hills of Rome, and ruleth over multitudes of his fellow-sinners. But Paul held that it was consistent to expect the Lord to come quickly, and yet to know that certain events must occur before he did come. That is just the condition, I think, to which a man's mind will come if he diligently and impartially reads the Scriptures, especially the prophetic parts of them. The Lord will come in such an hour as we think not, yet there are clear indications of certain things which are to happen before he does come.

**4.** *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

It has been said that the Pope of Rome is infallible, that his interpretation of Scripture, whatever it may be, is as valid as the Scripture itself, and that whatever he chooseth to decree must be obeyed by the faithful. Such are some of the pretensions even at this day of the "man of sin."

**5-7.** *Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work:*

There were certain reasons why that gigantic iniquity should begin to be developed even while the Roman Empire was in power to keep it in check; and when that passed away, there was the opportunity for "the mystery of iniquity" to become the despot of the world.

**7-10.** *Only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

This is the last sin of all, that ungodly men do not receive "the love of the truth." If they were themselves true, they would love the truth; if the grace of God was in them, his own precious truth would be prized by them above everything else, but when men finally

reject the truth by which they might be saved, God visits them with terrible judgments.

**11-17.** *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.*

So may it be, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

## **2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-4**

**1, 2.** *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

In his former Epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul had written as if he expected Christ to come immediately, and the people seem to have taken his words so literally as to have lived in expectation of Christ's advent, and perhaps to have exhibited some degree of fear concerning it. He now calms their minds by telling them that Christ would not come until certain events had happened. The history of the world was not complete, the harvest of the Church was not ripe; neither had the sin of man and especially the "man of sin" become fully developed.

**3, 4.** *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

If this “man of sin” be not the Pope of Rome, we cannot tell who is the antichrist. Certainly, if this description were put in the Hue-and-Cry, and we were police officers, we should at once arrest the Pope as the man whose character agreed with the warrant in our hands. What does he call himself? “Vicar of Christ on earth.” What does he do but set himself up to be adored and worshipped as though he were divine, making himself out to be the fountain and channel of all grace. Beloved, this “man of sin” has been revealed. Now we may look for the coming of the Son of man; but the day and the hour when he shall come no man knoweth; no, and not even the angels of God.

This exposition consisted of readings from 2 THESSALONIANS 1, 2:1-4.

## 2 THESSALONIANS 3

1. *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:*

A most important request. What can the ministers of the gospel do, if their people cease to pray for them? Even if their own prayers be heard, as they will be, and a measure of blessing be given, yet it will be but a scant measure, compared with what it would be if all the saints united in their intercessions. Whenever we see the word of God very mighty in one place it ought to encourage us to pray that it may be the same in another place, for it is the same word and the hearts of all men are alike., The same spirit can give the same blessing in every place. Hence Paul says, “Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified even as it is with you.” Now, if any of you in your church are enjoying rich prosperity, pray for others, that they may have the same. And, if you are without it, take courage from any church which you see prospering, and ask the Lord to do the same things for you. Very likely if we prayed more for ministers they would be more blessed to us. There is many a man who can not “hear” his minister and the reason may be that God never hears him pray for his minister.

2. *And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.*

I really do not know which is the worst to put up with — an unreasonable man or a wicked man. A wicked man may do you all sorts of mischief, but you soon know him. But an unreasonable man

— you do not know where to find him, and he can attack you from all sorts of places. Alas! there are some very unreasonable Christians — very good in some points, but very stupid; and a stupid man may set a village on a blaze quite as easily as a wicked man. The stupid man’s accident may be as dangerous as another man’s design. Pray also “that we may be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men, for all men have not faith,” and all men have not sense, I may also add.

**3. *But the Lord is faithful,***

There is the mercy. Whether men be fools or knaves, the Lord is faithful.

**3. *Who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.***

We are taught to pray for this grace. We are here told that we shall have it. Since God is faithful he will keep us from evil.

**4. *And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.***

Our obedience to apostolic ordinances should be of the present and of the future. It should be fixed in our souls. What the Lord has commanded in his church by his apostles should be carefully regarded by us.

**5. *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.***

The two things go together. When we love God, we long for the glory and the appearing of his Son. The most loving spirits in the world have had most an eye to that glorious coming. Note Enoch who walked with God and prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord cometh.” Note Daniel, “a man greatly beloved,” and a seer who looked into the future and saw the Ancient of Days. Mark also John who leaned his head on Jesus’ bosom, we may say of him that he spoke more of the second coming than all the rest of the apostles. When the heart gets right away from earth and is set upon God, then it is that we begin to long for the manifestation of the Lord from heaven.

**6. *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.***

Paul had been to Thessalonica, and had given oral teaching, and now he commits to the book what he had spoken; but he bids them take care not to associate with those who wilfully broke the ordinances of the church which he had taught them. There are some brethren with whom it is ill for us to associate, lest they do us hurt, and it is ill for them that we associate with them, lest we seem to assist them in their evil deeds. Especially is this so in the case of brethren of the class that he is about to describe — mischief makers, troublers, people that can always tell you the gossip of a congregation, that can tear a neighbour's character to pieces, that are able to perceive spots on the sun; people who delight in parading the fault of God's own children, and are never so happy as when they are making others unhappy by what they have to retail. These are the kind of people to whom you should give a wide berth.

*7-9. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.*

The apostle had a right to be supported by those among whom he laboured. He always insists upon that right; but for their good, knowing the tendency of that age, he himself abjured that right; and he is indignant that there should be others who did nothing whatever as to Christian ministry, but who availed themselves of the charity of the church at Thessalonica so as to be able to live upon it without work.

*10. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.*

A very capital rule, indeed. There are some so very spiritually minded that to soil their hands is also to soil their conscience. They are afraid of hard work. They think it is unspiritual; whereas there is nothing in the world, next to the grace of God, that is more likely to keep men out of mischief than having plenty to do.

*11. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.*

Not doing their own business, and therefore putting their noses into everybody else's business. If they had minded their own affairs,

they would have left other people alone. There are such people alive now. We must not be surprised if we meet them seeing that they were alive in the apostle's days; if they troubled him it must be small marvel if they trouble us.

**12.** *Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.*

The best bread and the sweetest, is our own. We are to work for it. We are to work with quietness. I suppose to some that is very hard work, but they must labour after it, for quietness is a Christian grace, it is indeed a high Christian attainment.

**13-15.** *But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

This kind of Christian discipline ought to be carried out still, in reference not only to this one ease of busybodies, but to all other cases. When a church grows large, there can be no efficient discipline from one man, or from all his officers with him. There must be the discipline of the whole church towards itself, each Christian, according to his measure of grace, seeking the good of the whole; for while every man must bear his own burden, yet is it said, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." "Look not every man upon his own things, but also upon the things of others." The careful desire to promote the Christian welfare of all our fellow members is a very different thing from being busybodies. We must have equal desire not in any way to interfere where we should not.

**16.** *Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means.*

What a sweet benediction! And how he heaps the words together, as if peace was one of the greatest blessings a church could have. Indeed, dear brethren it is the essential to all other blessings. I am quite certain that we never should have enjoyed here the long years of perpetual prosperity which we have had, if it had not pleased the Lord to keep us always in peace. So may we be for many and many a year to come! May no root of bitterness ever spring up to trouble us, but may this text be fulfilled — "Now the Lord of peace give you peace always by all means."

**16, 17.** *The Lord be with you all. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.*

I suppose he always wrote a part of each epistle. Probably through the failure of his eyesight he was unable to write the whole of it with his own hands, but employed some one of his brethren to be his amanuensis. But, in order that every one might know the epistle to be genuine, there was always a little of Paul's writing, sometimes in big text-hand, as when he says to one church, "You see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand."

**18.** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

So with great courtesy and a comprehensive prayer he finishes his letter.

## **2 THESSALONIANS 3:1-5**

**1.** *Finally, brethren, pray for us,*

"Pray for us," says the apostle, "pray for myself and the brethren who are with me, pray for all the apostles and preachers of the Word." "Finally, brethren." If this were the last word we had to say to you, we would make just this request, "Finally, brethren, pray for us." You cannot tell how much God's servants are helped by the prayers of his people. The strongest man in Israel will be the better for the prayers of the weakest saint in Zion. If you can do nothing else, you can pray for us; therefore, day and night, be ye at the mercy-seat on our behalf: "Finally, brethren, pray for us."

**1.** *That the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:*

"You Thessalonians enjoy the power of the Word. Pray that it may be so everywhere else." Paul is said to have written this Epistle from Corinth or Athens, and he longed that there the Word of God might prevail as it had done at Thessalonica. Pray just now that, in every part of the world, God's Word may have free course. There are many who stand in the way of it, pray God that they may be swept out of the way, that the Word of the Lord may have free course. We want the gospel to run, and spread, till the whole earth shall know its blessed message.

**2.** *And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.*

All men are not candid, or true: “all men have not faith.”

**3. *But the Lord is faithful,***

What a wonderful contrast this is, and how suggestive of comfort! “All men have not faith. But the Lord is full of faith, faithful.” True, he keeps all his promises: “The Lord is faithful.”

**3-5. *Who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. And the Lord direct your hearts —***

You see, Paul does not command the Thessalonians to do anything but what he can pray God to work in them. The command of a man, by itself, is nothing, but when he only asks that to be done which he can pray God to do, then there is power about his message: “We have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. And the Lord direct your hearts” —

**5. *Into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.***

May the Lord hear that prayer for all of us, for Christ Jesus’ sake! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from 2 THESSALONIANS 2. And 3:1-5.



# 1 TIMOTHY

## 1 TIMOTHY 1:1-17

*1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;*

Christ is our hope; we have not a shadow of a hope apart from him. I remember, when on the Continent, seeing on a cross the words “*Spes unica,*” the unique, the only hope of man; and that is true of the cross of Christ, and of Christ who suffered on it, he is our hope.

*2. Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Notice the apostle’s triple salutation, “Grace, mercy, and peace.” Whenever Paul writes to a church, he wishes “grace and peace”; but to a minister he wishes “grace, mercy, and peace.” Ah! we want mercy more than the average of Christians; we have greater responsibilities; and, consequently, might more readily fall into greater sin, so to a minister Paul’s salutation is, “grace, mercy, and peace.”

*3, 4. As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.*

You see, the apostle, in his day, had to contend against those who ran away from the simplicity of the gospel into all manner of fables and inventions. Such, in our day, are the doctrine of evolution, the doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God, the doctrine of post-mortem salvation, the doctrine of the final restitution of all men, and all sorts of fables and falsehoods which men have invented.

*5-7. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be*

*teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*

There were some who put the law into its wrong place. They made it a way of salvation, which it never was meant to be, and never can be. It is a way of conviction. It is an instrument of humbling. It shows us the evil of sin; but it never takes sin away.

**8.** *But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;*

In its own place it has its own uses, and these are most important.

**9-13.** *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer,*

Paul must have written this verse with many tears. What a wonder of grace it was that he should be put into the sacred ministry, to bear testimony for Christ, when he had been before a blasphemer!

**13.** *And a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*

He almost thought that, if he had done all this wilfully, he might not have been forgiven; but he felt that here God spied out the only extenuating circumstance, namely, that he was mistaken: "I did it ignorantly, in unbelief."

**14, 15.** *And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

He spoke from his heart, from deep experience. This indeed was to him the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that had saved him, the very chief of sinners. He could therefore with confidence commend it to others as worthy of all acceptation.

**16.** *Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*

The case of Paul is not a singular one; it is the pattern one. If there are any here who feel that they have sinned like Saul of Tarsus, they may be forgiven like Paul the apostle. He is a pattern to all who should thereafter believe in Christ to life everlasting. Just as we often see things cut out in brown paper, and sold as patterns, so is the apostle Paul the pattern convert. What God did for him, he can do for thousands of others.

**17.** *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Paul could not help this outburst of praise. He must put in a doxology. When he remembered his own conversion and pardon, and his being entrusted with the ministry of the gospel, he was obliged to put down his pen, and lift up his voice in grateful thanksgiving to God. So may it be with us, as we remember what great things the Lord hath done for us!

# 2 TIMOTHY

## 2 TIMOTHY 1

*1, 2. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

I would again remind you, as I have often done before, that the apostle Paul, when he is writing to a minister, invariably begins his epistle with the triple greeting, "Grace, mercy, and peace," but when he is writing to a church, he commences with the double benediction, "Grace and peace." You will find that this is his wish for the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, "Grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." This is also his form of greeting to Philemon, who was a private Christian, not a minister; but when the apostle is writing to Timothy and Titus, his own sons in the faith, and his fellow-ministers of the gospel, he says, "Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord." It seems as though, guided by the Holy Spirit, he thought that the office of the Christian ministry is of so weighty and responsible a character that the man who rightly fills that honourable position not only needs the grace and peace that are necessary for all believers, but that he must in addition have a special supply of mercy; and, truly, no one needs mercy more than the preacher of mercy. Note, too, that the "grace, mercy, and peace" are to come "from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." Father and Son are united in the gracious act of bestowing "grace, mercy, and peace." The Father is the great eternal fountain of all these blessings, but the son is the divinely appointed channel through whom they flow down to us.

*3. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;*

Thank God that Paul had such a sympathetic spirit, and that Timothy's needs so continually rose before his supplicating eye, and that Paul was able to pray for Timothy, not with anxiety, not in doubtfulness, but with thankfulness. Oh, that all young Christians might be such consistent Christians that those who have brought them to Christ might always be able to pray for them with thankfulness!

*4. Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;*

I suppose that Timothy was very tender-hearted, and that he had been grieved because of Paul's many afflictions; and, on his part, the apostle greatly missed his dearly-beloved son in the faith. In the latter part of this Epistle, Paul writes, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world;" and again, "Do thy diligence to come before winter, " Looking forward to his impending martyrdom, Paul longed for the companionship of the one who was so specially dear to him.

*5. When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

Grace does not run in the blood, but it often runs side by side with it. The "grandmother Lois" and the "mother Eunice " had the true grace of saving faith dwelling in them, and Paul was persuaded that it dwelt in the son and grandson Timothy.

*6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance-*

Paul had been speaking of his own remembrance of Timothy, and of Timothy's faith, and now he says, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance"--

*6. That thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*

The best of fires need stirring sometimes; and the best gift of God, even the sacred fire of the Holy Spirit, may sometimes burn low in the heart; so that we have need to stir up the gift of God that is within us. There are some brethren, also, who have more God-given gifts within them than they know of. They have never searched for them, so they allow them to lie hidden away unobserved and useless. We have need to stir up our gifts as well as

our graces, and to use to God's glory all the powers with which he hath entrusted us.

*7. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

What a boon this is to all who can truly say, with Paul, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind!"

*8. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,--*

There is need to say this today, for many are becoming "ashamed of the testimony of our Lord," that old-fashioned gospel which Paul received by direct revelation from his Lord, and for which he laid down his life. It is fashionable nowadays to put on the furbelows of modern philosophy rather than to be robed in the snow-white garment of truth. Paul says to Timothy, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,"--

*8, 9. Nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling,*

Salvation comes first, and calling afterwards; at least, so it is in the great plan of redemption. We are saved by the death of Christ before we are effectually called by his grace. The great work of our salvation was wrought for us on Calvary, and now we are made to know and to partake of that salvation by the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the gospel.

*9. Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,--*

What a blessed doctrine this is! Some people cannot endure even to hear or read of it, but it is full of comfort and joy for the Spirit-taught people of God. God's grace was "given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,--

*10, 11. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.*

How Paul gloried in this triple divine appointment! He commenced this Epistle by writing, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ

by the will of God; “and here he says of the gospel, “whereunto I am appointed a preacher.” I see that some tradesmen put up a notice over their shops stating that they are so-and-so “by appointment to Her Majesty,” but Paul had the highest honour under heaven in being “appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

**12.** *For the which cause I also suffer these things:*

And I expect that his eyes glanced round on the walls of his dungeon, and that he rattled the chains that bound his hands to those of the soldiers who had him in their charge.

**12-15.** *Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*

Probably these were leaders who ought to have acted differently, and to have stuck by the apostle; but when he was in prison, and likely to be put to death by Nero, many, who had been his former companions, forsook him, and were ashamed to own him, for which we also are ashamed of them. It is the same now, if the servant of God shall fall into the disfavour of the great ones of the earth, many will be ashamed of him. Paul mentions these who turned away from him, for their unfaithfulness evidently grieved him sorely; but he also mentions another case of quite a different sort:--

**16, 17.** *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.*

He did not know exactly where the apostle was, in which prison he was confined; but he went from place to place until at last he lighted upon him, and then he was not ashamed to be seen ministering to the poor chained prisoner. We read of various corporations spending a great deal of money in buying chains of office for their mayors; but this chain, worn by the apostle in his prison-cell at Rome, was far more valuable than any of them. What an eternal honour it will be to him, and how and it is that anyone

should have been ashamed of his fetters when he was so bravely suffering for Christ's sake! There was more value in those chains on Paul's wrists than in all the chains that were ever worn on the necks of the great ones of this world.

**18.** *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day:*

He came to Paul, and talked with him and probably sang with him, and prayed with him, I have no doubt. He often refreshed the apostle in Rome; and then Paul added:--

**18.** *And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.*

This happy Onesiphorus, was a true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved to minister to the apostle when he was in suffering and sorrow.

This exposition consisted of readings from 2 TIMOTHY 1; AND 2:1-13.

## **2 TIMOTHY 1:1-8**

**1, 2.** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son:*

There is the greatest possible affection between the preacher and his convert. This is a relationship which even death will not destroy. They neither marry nor are given in marriage in the Heavenly Kingdom, but this fatherhood and sonship shall endure for ever.

**2.** *Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

It is not a little remarkable that, when the apostle writes to churches, he usually wishes them "Grace and peace"; but when he writes to a minister, he generally prays for "Grace, mercy, and peace", as if we needed more mercy than other Christians. Having so great a work to do, and falling into such great sin if we are unfaithful in it, we may well ask that we may have special mercy showed unto us by the God of mercy.

**3.** *I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;*

At that time, Timothy was very specially laid upon the apostle's heart and he did not seem to think of anything without young Timothy's image rising up before him "night and day."

*4. Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;*

Paul had seen Timothy's tears when he parted from him. He remembered, perhaps, his tears when under conviction of sin, his tears of joy when he found the Saviour, and the tears he shed in his early preaching, when the gracious youth touched the hearts of others because he so evidently spoke out of his own heart.

*5. When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

There is no transmigration of souls, but there is a kind of transmigration of faith, as if the very form and shape of faith, which was in Lois and Eunice, afterwards appeared in Timothy. Truly, there are certain idiosyncrasies which may pass from some Christian people to others; and when those idiosyncrasies are of a high and noble kind, it is a great mercy to see them reproduced in children and children's children. "I thought I heard your mother speak," said one, when she heard a Christian woman talking of the Saviour, "you speak in just the way in which she used to tell out her experience, and describe the love of Christ."

*6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*

The fire needs stirring every now and then; it is apt to die out if it is not stirred.

*7, 8. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God;*

Timothy, never be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, and never be ashamed of Paul when he is put in prison for the sake of the gospel; but ask to partake, not only of the gospel, and of the power of it, but even of the afflictions which come for its sake, for this is one of the highest honours that can be put upon us, that we may suffer with

God's saints for the truth's sake. Paul, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter, goes on to tell Timothy of the danger of his times.

This exposition consisted of readings from 2 TIMOTHY 1:1-8; 3; AND 4:1-6

## **2 TIMOTHY 1:1-18**

**1.** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,*

Paul takes high ground. He is not an apostle by the will of the Church, but an apostle by the will of God. God's will is the great motive power in the Church of God. Some talk a great deal about man's will. What think you of God's will, the will of the Almighty? Surely that shall stand. Paul felt that he had that at the back of him. "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." Hence he always speaks very boldly. He never asks leave of anybody. If he is an apostle by the will of God, he exercises his office without fear.

**2.** *To Timothy, my dearly beloved son:*

Son in the faith. When all the ties of natural descent shall be forgotten, sonship in Christ will continue. I do not doubt that in heaven Timothy is still Paul's son; Paul is still father to Timothy, for the relation is of the Spirit.

**2.** *Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

I think I have called upon you to notice that when Paul writes to a church, it is "Grace and peace." Whenever he writes to a minister, it is "Grace, mercy, and peace." I have sometimes wondered whether we ministers need mercy more than other people, and I suppose that we do, or else the Apostle would not have said, "Grace, mercy, and peace." Oh! if a minister gets to heaven, it will be a wonder. His responsibilities are so great. "Who is sufficient for these things?" It will be a marvelous display of mercy if any of us shall be able to say at last, "I am clear of the blood of all men"; for we have not only our own blood, but the blood of others to look to in this matter.

**3.** *I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;*

For this Paul thanks God. He never forgot to pray for Timothy, and it is a matter of thankfulness. When we feel moved to pray, though it be for another, the spirit of prayer is essentially the same, whatever its object; and we ought to be thankful when we feel continually able to pray for a friend. "I thank God," says he, and he says that he had served God with a pure conscience all his days. So he had, but it was a blind conscience. At first, when he was a Pharisee, he still served God, though he then persecuted ignorantly the people of God. Oh! but it is a good thing sincerely to follow after God. May we be helped to do so. "I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day."

*4. Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;*

What were those tears? Tears of holy men and women are as precious as diamonds. Paul had noticed the tear twinkling in brother Timothy's eye — the tear of repentance, the tear of gratitude, the tear of fervent desire. He had noticed that, and, being mindful of all this, he wished to see that dear face again. Christianity does not make us unsociable. It gives us new ties of love, fresh brothers, fresh sons.

*5. When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

Happy son who has grandmother and mother before him in the faith. Unhappy young man who has quitted the faith of his fathers, and has turned altogether aside. If such be here, we would remember them in our prayers, but we cannot say that we can remember them with joy.

*6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*

Stir up your gifts like a fire. It will not burn without poking sometimes. Stir it up. And every now and then it is a good thing to have our heart stirred up, aroused, quickened, brought to a higher diligence. We must try to do this. Perhaps there are some dear friends here who have a large measure of latent gift, dormant faculty. Stir up the gift that is in thee.

*7. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

Neither Paul, nor Timothy had a craven spirit. They were none of them afraid. God had taught them his truth, and they knew it, and they held it, defying all opposition.

*8. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner:*

What! were people ashamed of Paul? Oh! yes, dear friends. The great Apostle, because he was persecuted, found himself despised by some of the very people who owed their souls to him. It is the lot of those who are faithful to Christ to find even good men sometimes turning against them. But what of that? They are responsible to their Master, not to their fellow-servants. Yet it is a hard thing when any come to be ashamed of you — ashamed of you, though you know that you have done right. I do not wonder that he puts it even to Timothy, “Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner.” Some of us know what it is to have trained and brought up these about us, who were to us what Timothy was to Paul, who have been ashamed of us, and of the testimony of our Lord.

*8. But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;*

You will want the power of God to do it, and mind you do it. Take your full share in whatever affliction the gospel brings upon Christians. “According to the power of God.”

*9. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

How plain it is that he earnestly believed in the eternal election of believers — in their being in Christ, and in their possession of grace in Christ. “Grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” God’s love to his people is not a thing of yesterday. He loved them before the world was made, and he will love them when the world has ceased to be. “It was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

*10-12. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and*

*immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

Paul knew that grace could keep his soul, but I think that he here means that he could keep his own gospel. Paul had kept it, kept the faith, but he committed it now into the hand of the greater One, who would keep it when every apostle was dead, and every faithful witness had passed away. "He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

**13.** *Hold fast the form of sound words,*

Many say they have no creeds, and there is hardly an Epistle in which there is not a distinct mention of a creed.

**13.** *Which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*

Hold fast the truth. Hold fast the very form and shape of it. If you are to keep the life that is in an egg, you must not even break the shell. Take care of it all, and take care of it all the more when with specious reasoning they say, "We will hold the same truth, only in a different form." Why a different form at all, if they do not wish to hold a different doctrine altogether? Nay, my brethren, especially you that are like young Timothy, take this passage to heart. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

**14.** *That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.*

This is what we want. If the Holy Ghost be in us, we shall never trifle with the truth. He is the lover and revealer of truth, and we shall press the doctrines of the Word of God itself nearer and nearer to our hearts in portion as the Holy Spirit dwells in us.

**15.** *This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;*

What! turned away from Paul? Some people think it is an awful thing because certain people turn away from a minister of Christ. It is not an awful thing at all, except for them. Paul stands fast; even

he, the bravest of the brave, and they all turn aside from him. What of that? Does Paul flinch? Nay, not he. "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me."

**15.** *Of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*

Two men who ought to have known better. Paul evidently fixed his eye upon them — more bitter than others, more perverse, more cruel, more willfully guilty in turning aside from him.

**16, 17.** *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.*

You could not tell in Rome where a prisoner was. The registers were not open to investigation. You had to go from prison to prison, and fee the guards to get admission, or to be told who might be there, and Onesiphorus was determined to find out Paul. I suppose that he went to the Mamertine, a dungeon in which some of us have been — one dungeon under the bottom of another. The first one has no light, except through a round hole at the top, and the second has a round hole through which you drop into the lower one. We think that Paul was there. And then there is the Palatine prison, which was at the guard-house of the Praetorian guards, near the palace on the Palatine Hill. There Paul certainly was, and Onesiphorus went from one jail to another. "Have you seen a little Jew with weak eye?" I daresay that was his description of him. "He is a friend of mine. I want to speak with him." "What! that Paul? — the man that is chained to one or another of us every morning? We have twelve hours of it, and he preaches to us most of the time." "Oh! that is the man," said Onesiphorus. "That is the man. Does he talk about Jesus Christ?" "Oh! nothing else but that. He will not let any soldier go from being bound to him without hearing about Jesus Christ." "That is my man," said Onesiphorus. He sought him out very diligently, and he found him.

**18.** *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.*

## **2 TIMOTHY 2:1-13**

**1, 2.** *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

This is the true apostolical succession,-one minister brings another to Christ, and then charges that other to train other preachers and teachers to carry on the blessed work of evangelization.

**3, 4.** *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

The man who has given himself wholly to the service of Christ must not undertake any other business that would prevent his giving his whole strength to his Master's work.

**5-8.** *And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to My gospel:*

The resurrection of Christ is the corner-stone of the glorious temple of truth, the key-stone of the arch of revelation. Paul tells us, in that great chapter, 1 Corinthians 15, how hopeless our case would be if Christ was not "raised from the dead; "but he also proves most conclusively that he was raised "the third day, according to the Scriptures."

**9.** *Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.*

Thank God that it is not yet bound though many have tried to fetter it. When they think that they have manacled it, it breaks loose again, and so it always will. However low this heavenly fire may burn, it soon blazes up again, and so it shall to the world's end. Immortal as the Christ who is the sum and substance of it is the everlasting gospel of the blessed God.

**10-13.** *Therefore I endure all things from the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall*

*also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.—*

Blessed truth, God grant us the grace to mediate upon it until we also shall become faithful to him and to his truth!

This exposition consisted of readings from 2 TIMOTHY 1; AND 2:1-13.

## **2 TIMOTHY 2:1-14**

*1. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

Is an exhortation to every one of us, not only to have grace, but to be strong in it. There are many professors who, so long as they are just saved, are content. We are not content with being barely alive spiritually; we do not wish to have our life shivering with cold, but we seek after comfort as well as existence, and we seek to be in health, as well as to be in life. So should it be with the Christian. He should pray, "Lord, make me strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Oh! that these words might be, not merely an exhortation, but a divine fiat, that as God said, "Let there be light," so he may say to his children, "Be ye strong," and then oh! how soon shall the weakest of us leap into immortal strength!

*2. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

So, then, there is to be a succession of teachers in the church, and these do ill who are always speaking against the ministry of God. Timothy receives his ministry of Paul; he is to commit it to faithful men, and these are to hold it in custody to teach to others also. But there are some who say that all Christians should be teachers. To which we answer, if the whole body were a mouth, where were the ear. The mouth is, after all, but a vacuum; if the whole body be mouth, there will be no body at all. If all are to be shepherds, where are to be the sheep? If all are to sow, where are we to find the ground? Nay, brethren, we must be careful to pray God to continue the ministry in our midst, for without it we miss many blessings. "The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

**3.** *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

If thou desirest delicacy, join not the army. A soldier's calling is not to be linked with softnesses, and if thou desirest ease and comfort, join not the army of Christ, for a Christian's profession and these go not together.

**4.** *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

So Timothy, as a Christian minister, is to act as the Roman soldier did. It was a law in Rome that no soldier was to plead in court for another as a lawyer, or to act in business for another as a bailiff, or to have anything to do, while a soldier, with either husbandry or merchandise. And so should it be with the men of God who strove to break the Word, and every Christian indeed, though he meddleth with common things, is to take care that he be not entangled by them, not to be caught, as it were, as game is entangled in a net. There is a way, you know, of making the actions of common life subservient to the purposes of divine grace. This is the Christian's business; let him take care that 'he be not entangled with the cares of this life.

**5.** *And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*

There were rules in the Grecian games. When they struck each other, the blow was not to be given except upon a certain part of the body, and if a man fought unlawfully, he could not get the prize. So there are laws, too, for the Christian ministry, and also holy regulations for the great wrestling of Christians.

**6.** *The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.*

This is a law. No man has any right to be a partaker at all till he has first tasted of the fruits of the field. Until we have first tasted that the "Lord is gracious," we cannot effectively or properly minister the things of God.

**7, 8, 9.** *Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer*

*trouble, as an evil doers; even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.*

See how the apostle comforts himself. Here he is in prison, but the truth is free. He sits with the chains about his wrists, but the Word of God travels from nation to nation, from continent to continent, like the free spirit that dwelleth in it.

**10.** *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

Not that the sufferings of Paul had anything meritoriously to do with the salvation of the elect, but that by his earnest strivings and sufferings the word of the gospel was brought to their hearing; faith then came by hearing, and so they were saved.

**11, 12, 13.** *It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*

Glory be to God, the unbelief of man cannot make God break his promises. Christian, all thine unbelief has not made God unfaithful to thee: and sinner, though thou cast out the promise of God as being good for nothing, yet he will not therefore raise the recompense of reward, for Jesus will save others if he save not thee. "He abideth faithful."

**14.** *Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.*

There are some Christians who need this exhortation given to them in these days, for they are always striving about words to no profit. Beware of these men, if you would not have your faith staggered.

## **2 TIMOTHY 2:15-26**

**15.** *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

This is a metaphor taken from the action of the priest at the sacrifice. The priest cut up the bullock, and then laid it in its different pieces according to order. Or, as some think, it is taken from the part of the father at the table, when he carves the meat and

gives to every child its portion. Old Master Trapp says that “there are some ministers who are only fit to be Gibeonites and certainly not to be Levites, for they hardly understand the cutting of wood, much less the art of cutting up the sacrifice of God.” Brethren, it is well so to handle the word as to be able to give rebuke when rebuke is wanted, exhortation when it is needed, and comfort when consolation is required, for otherwise we do mischief. As it is said in the old fable of the simpleton, that he gave to the ass a bone and to the dog hay, so there are some who give wrong exhortations, not because they are wrong in themselves, but because they are wrong in their application.

**16, 17.** *But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker:*

Now, there are some people who can never be content except they make their religion a sort of wrangling match. They get a-hold of a word in Scripture, and away they go with it. Here shall be another opportunity for finding fault with all the church of God; here shall be another occasion for railing against all the preachers of the truth. How delighted they are when they can do this! Shun profane and vain babblings. Martin Luther said that there were some in his day so nice and precise about the letter of Scripture that when one of them had delivered an exposition upon the Book of Job, Luther said that by the time the man had got to the tenth chapter Job had been a thousand times more plagued by the expositors than he had ever been by the losses which he suffered upon the dunghill, and doubtless there are many truths of Scripture which are turned to mischief because men will be for ever making them opportunities for strife, and not bonds of love. Brethren, hold the five points of the Calvinistic doctrine, but mind you do not hold them as babbling questions. What you have received of God do not learn in order to fight with it, and to make contention and strife, and to divide the church of God, and rail against the people of the Most high, as some do. But, on the contrary, love one another as brethren, and hold the truth in love, and seek after the unity of the Spirit and the perfect bond of charity. The word of those who raise these questions will eat as doth a cancer, which eats till it gets to the bones, and turns the sound flesh into rottenness. Oh! there are many contentions which have done this mischief in the church of Christ.

**17-19.** *Of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.*

How careful the apostle is lest we should think that any have turned aside who were the Lord's people. He says the faith of some was overthrown, but nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure. Oh brethren, whenever we see apparent apostasy, let us not therefore think that any of God's people have perished. Oh, no; for the Lord knoweth them that are his.

**19-21.** *And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

When Mr. Philpot the martyr, was addressing a young man about to die for Christ, he said to him, "Brother, thou art a vessel in the great house of thy Master, and this day he will scour thee, scour thee hard, but remember thou shalt soon stand upon the shelf, shining bright and glorious." Well, sometimes pains, and troubles, and tribulations do have this effect of scouring the vessels of God to make them bright for heaven. We must all be purged and scoured from sinful lusts, from all the contamination of the flesh and of the creature, and then we shall be fit for the Master's use.

**22.** *Flee also youthful lusts:*

Run away from them; it is no use contending with them. Fight with the devil. Resist the devil, and make him flee, but never fight with the flesh. Run away from that. The only way to avoid the lust of the flesh is to keep out of its way. If you subject yourself to carnal temptations and fleshly lusts, remember it is almost certain that you will be overcome by them. "Flee youthful lusts", and as you must keep going and have something after which to follow —

**22, 23.** *But follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.*

It is generally a good thing to avoid all questions that gender strife, except they be upon vital and important matters. For, oh!

brethren, it is so important to keep the unity of the Spirit, it is such a blessed thing to preserve love among Christian brethren, and there be some who in order to create disunion, go about the land, and tear, and rend the body of Christ as much as ever they can. Beware of such; seek not their company; come not nigh unto them, lest their canker pollute you also.

**24-26.** *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

We have here laid down, then, the duty of the Christian minister, and the duty of each Christian, too, and let us seek, in the Holy Spirit's grace, to carry it out, being at once firm, and gentle, and loving of heart, and yet honest for the truth as it is in Jesus.

## **2 TIMOTHY 3 AND 4:1-6**

**1-7.** *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sin, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

This is the photograph of the present age, and I do not doubt that Paul spoke of it when thus the spirit of prophecy was upon him. This is the very motto of the present age, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." It glories in knowing nothing; and its great boast is in its continual progress, "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

**8, 9.** *Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the*

*faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was.*

For, when God was with Moses and Aaron, Jannes and Jambres were soon, by the power and wisdom of God, proved to be fools.

**10-12.** *But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecution I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

The world does not love Christ, or his gospel, an atom more today than it did in Paul's day. "The carnal mind is" still "enmity against God."

**13.** *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*

We may look for even worse days and darker days than we have at present.

**14-17.** *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

## **2 TIMOTHY 4:1-6**

**1-6.** *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry for I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.*

## **2 TIMOTHY 4:1-11**

**1, 2.** *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word;*

We are not to use such strong language as this, unless there is some sufficient reason for it. We must not be too hot upon cold matters, but even this is better than to be cold upon matters that require heat. When John Calvin wished to leave Geneva to complete his studies elsewhere, that man of God, Farrell, knowing how necessary it was for the Church that Calvin should remain at Geneva, charged him before God that he dared not go, and hoped that a curse might light upon all his studies, if for the sake of them he should forsake what he held to be his duty. So sometimes, like the Apostle, we may before the Judge of quick and dead, charge men not to forsake their work and calling.

**2.** *Be instant in season, out of season;*

The Greek word means, “Stand up to it;” as when a man is determined to finish his work, he stands right up to it. Stand over your work, putting your whole strength into it up-standing over it. “In season, out of season,” because the Gospel is a fruit which is in season all the year round. Sometimes these “out of season” sermons, preached at night or at some unusual time, have been of more service than the regular ordinances of God’s house. Mr. Grimshaw used to ride on horseback from village to village throughout the more desolate parts of Yorkshire, and wherever he met with ten or a dozen people, he would preach on horseback to them, preaching sometimes as many as four and twenty sermons in a week. That was being instant “out of season” as well as “in season.” So should God’s Timothys be, and, indeed, all of us.

**2.** *Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

That is, do not exhort with mere declamation, but put some argument into your exhortation. Some men think it quite enough to appear to be in earnest, though they have nothing to say. Let such exhorters remember that they are to exhort with doctrine, with solid teaching.

*3. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

When men have not good preachers, they are sure to have a great many of them. Those nations which have the worst priests always have them in swarms. So let us be thankful if God sends us a glowing and zealous minister, for even those who count it an affliction to have a minister, would be more afflicted if they had not a good one. But how evil is it when men get itching ears, when they want some one to be perpetually tickling them, giving them some pretty things, some fine pretentious intellectualism. In all congregations there is good to be done, except in a congregation having itching ears. From this may God deliver us.

*4. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

When a man will not believe the truth, he is sure ere long to be a greedy believer of lies. No persons are so credulous as skeptics. There is no absurdity so gross but what an unbeliever will very soon be brought to receive it, though he rejects the truth of God.

*5, 6. But watch thou in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.*

How complacently he talks about it! It is only a departure, though Caesar's sword might smite his head from his body. And truly death to the believer is no frightful thing. "Go up," said God to Moses, and the prophet went up, and God took away his soul to him, and he was blessed. And so, "Come up," saith God to the Christian, and the Christian goeth up, first to his chamber, and then from his chamber to Paradise.

*7, 8. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

This seems, then, to be a distinguishing mark of a true child of God, he loves the appearing of Christ. Now there are some professors who never think of the Second Advent at all. It never gives them the slightest joy to believe that —

“Jesus the king will come,  
To take his people up To their eternal home.”

Truly they are mistaken and are surely wrong, for was not this the very comfort that Christ gave to his disciples: “If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” I trust, dear friends, we are among those “who love his appearing,” and if we are, it is a sure prophecy that we shall have a crown of righteousness.

**9, 10.** *Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica;*

Demas was once almost a martyr, he was upon the very edge of suffering, but now you see he goeth back to the world again; he is not content to lie in the dungeon and rot with Paul, but will rather seek his own ease. Alas! Demas, how hast thou dishonoured thyself for ever, for every man who reads this passage as he passes by, flings another stone at the heap which is the memorial of one of cowardly spirit who fled from Paul in danger.

**10.** *Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

It is likely that Paul had sent Crescens and Titus away upon a mission but now, from certain intimations, the Apostle is sure that his time of death is coming on, and so indeed it was, for his head was struck off by Nero’s orders a few weeks after the writing of this Epistle, and now he somewhat laments that he had sent them away. And would not you and I want the consolation of kind faces round about us, and the sweet music of loving voices in our ears, if we were about to be offered up?

**11.** *Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*

That is one of the prettiest verses in the Bible, because you will remember that the Apostle Paul quarreled with Barnabas about this very Mark, because John Mark would not go into Bithynia to preach the Word, but left Paul and Barnabas, therefore Paul would not have Mark with him any more, because he had turned in the day of trouble. But now Paul is about to die, and he wishes to be perfectly at peace with everyone. He has quite forgiven poor John Mark himself for his former weakness; he sees grace in him, and so he is afraid lest John Mark should be under some apprehensions of the

Apostle's anger, and so he puts in this very kind passage, without seeming to have any reference at all to the past, but he gives him this great praise — “for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”



# TITUS

## TITUS 1

While reading this chapter, we must understand that Titus was sent to Crete, to superintend the preaching of the gospel throughout that island. Crete was at that time inhabited by a people who were only partially civilized, and sunk in the very worst of vices. Paul, therefore, tells Titus to speak to them about things which would hardly be mentioned to Christians nowadays.

*1-4. Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; to Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

You have probably noticed that Paul's benediction, when he is writing to a minister, is always, "Grace, mercy, and peace." Writing to churches, his usual formula is, "Grace be to you, and peace;" but God's servants, called to the work of the ministry, need very special "mercy"-as if the higher the office, the greater the liability to sin, and therefore, in his Pastoral Epistles, whether he is addressing Titus or Timothy, Paul wishes for his sons in the faith, "Grace, mercy, and peace." Oh, what a mercy it will be for any of us ministers if, at the last, we are clear of the blood of all men! If, having been called to preach the gospel, we shall do it so faithfully as to be acquitted and even rewarded by our Lord and Master, it will be mercy upon mercy. This "charge" of the beloved Pastor has even more force and pathos now that he has gone "away" to heaven.

*5, 6. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife,*

For there were many converts there who had two or three wives. Whatever position they might be permitted to occupy in the church, they could not become officers, they must keep in the rear rank.

**6-12.** *Having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own,*

According to Jerome, this was Epimenides, a prophet-poet, who lived in Crete in the sixth century before Christ.

**12.** *Said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.*

They were a degraded people; and hence, those who would teach them had a most difficult task, and needed great grace. Paul exhorts Titus that only specially fit men, men whose example would have influence, and whose characters would have weight, should be allowed to be elders in such churches.

**13-16.** *This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*

This was bad soil; but it had to be ploughed, and to be sown, and with an Almighty God at the back of the gospel plougher and sower, a fruitful harvest came even in Crete. We need not be afraid of the adaptation of the gospel to the lowest of the low. If there be any quarter of the town where the people are more sunken in vice than anywhere else, there the gospel is to be carried with more prayer and more faith than anywhere else. Depend upon it, God can bless his Word anywhere, among Cretans, or among any other sort of degraded people.

This exposition consisted of readings from TITUS 1. AND 2.

## TITUS 2

**1.** *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:*

There are certain things which are suitable to go with sound doctrine; they are meet and fit and appropriate thereto.

**2.** *That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.*

Among the heathen, old men often gave themselves up to drunkenness and gluttony; so now, this is the teaching that is to be given to aged Christian men. They need faith, love, and patience, as well as the virtues of sobriety, gravity, and temperance. The infirmities of old age often create petulance, so the grace of God is to make the venerable Christian to be full of faith, love, and patience.

**3.** *The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;*

Old women also among the heathen were often addicted to the taking of much wine, so here they are cautioned against it by the Spirit of God. They are also tempted to spread slanderous reports against people: having little to do in their old age, they are apt to do that little by way of mischief; so they are warned that they are not to be “false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.” And how beautifully can an aged Christian woman, by her kindly example, be a teacher of good things! There is no more charming sight under heaven, I think, than that of an elderly Christian lady, whose words and whose whole life are such as becometh the gospel of Christ.

**4, 5.** *That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.*

There were some women who supposed that, the moment they became Christians, they were to run about everywhere. “No,” says the apostle, “let them keep at home.” There is no gain to the Christian Church when the love, and the industry, and the zeal,

which ought to make a happy home, are squandered upon something else. The young women of Crete appear to have been such that they needed to be taught “to love their husbands.” That expression does not occur elsewhere in Scripture. Christian women do not need to be told to love their husbands; but these Cretans, just brought out of the slough of sin, had to be taught even this lesson. Oh, what a blessing is love in the marriage relationship, and what a gracious influence love has upon children! How are they to be brought up aright except the whole house be perfumed with love?

**6.** *Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.*

That exhortation is as necessary in London as it was in Crete. Young men often know a great deal, or think they do; and they are very apt to be intoxicated with the idea of knowing so much, and being able to do so much, so that the exhortation to them is to “be sober minded.”

**7-9.** *In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants--*

Or, as it might and should be rendered, “bond-slaves”

**9, 10.** *To be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining,*

Not picking and stealing, which very naturally was the common habit of slaves; and who wonders at it in their wretched condition?

**10.** *But shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

Is not that a wonderful passage? Here is a slave able to be an ornament to the gospel of Christ! This blessed gospel is not sent to kings and princes only; when Paul preached it, the great mass of the population were in cruel bondage, treated like dogs, or even worse; yet the gospel had a message even for them, it told them that they might, by a godly character, adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.

**11-15.** *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for*

*us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

This exposition consisted of readings from TITUS 1. AND 2.

## **TITUS 2:6-15**

**6.** *Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.*

They are full of spirits, they are very sanguine, they are apt to be carried away with novelties; exhort them to have that which is thought to be a virtue of age, namely, sobriety. Let them be old when they are young that they may be young when they are old.

**7.** *In all things skewing thyself a pattern of good works:*

Titus was himself a young man; he must, therefore, be a pattern to young men; and as a pastor or evangelist he must be a pattern to all sorts of men.

**7, 8.** *in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.*

It is a pity when truth suffers at the hand of its own advocate; and perhaps the very worst wounds that truth has received have been in the house of its friends. You must be careful, therefore, “that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”

**9.** *Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters,*

They were mostly slaves in those days. A sad condition of society was that in which service meant slavery; yet even slaves were “to be obedient unto their own masters.”

**9, 10.** *And to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining,*

Not practicing petty thefts, as, alas! some servants do even now,--

**10.** *But shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

The life of the Christian, even if he be a servant, is to be an ornament of Christianity. Christ does not look for the ornament of his religion to the riches or the talents of his followers, but to their

holy lives “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

**11, 12.** *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*

Christians are not to run out of the world, as monks and hermits sought to do, but to live “in this present world.” Yet, while in the world, we are to be godly, that is, full of God. That kind of life which is without God is not for Christians. Those worldly desires, the pride and ambition, which are common to worldly men, are not to have power over us; we are to deny them, and to live soberly. This word relates not only to eating and drinking, but to the general sobriety of a man’s mind: “Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

**13, 14.** *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

See what Christ died for, see what Christ lives for, see what we are to live for, that we should not only be a people purified, but purified unto Himself. We are not only to have good works, but we are to be zealous of them; we are to burn with zeal for them, for zeal is a kind of fire, it is to burn and blaze in us until we warm and enlighten others also.

**15.** *These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*

As I have already reminded you, Titus was a young man; and people are apt to despise the pastoral office when it is held by a young man. Yet they ought always to respect it, whether it be held by a young man or an old man. God knows best who is most fitted for the work of the ministry: and those of us who are getting old must never look with any kind of scorn or contempt upon those who are commencing their service, for we, too, were young once. You cannot measure a man’s grace by the length of his beard, nor by the number of his years.

This exposition consisted of readings from TITUS 2:6-15, AND 3.

### TITUS 3

**1, 2.** *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.*

Gentleness was not reckoned a virtue among the Greeks; I do not suppose that the people in Crete had ever heard of it before Paul wrote this Epistle to Titus. Among the Romans and the Greeks, it seemed to be a virtue to stand up for your own, to be like a gamecock, who is always ready to fight, and will never miss a chance of fighting; but this Christian virtue of gentleness is a most amiable one, and greatly adorns the doctrine of Christ. The world has run away with this word gentle, and now calls many a person a gentleman who has no right to the name. I wish that every gentleman were indeed a gentleman. It is very significant that Moses, the type of the Lord Jesus under the law, was the meekest of men; should not Christians therefore excel in gentleness under this milder dispensation?

**3, 4.** *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,*

“The philanthropy of God” would be a good translation, or rather, a sort of borrowing from the Greek itself. “After we had seen the philanthropy of God,”--

**5-8.** *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying,*

It would be worth while for you to turn to the other places in which this expression, “This is a faithful saying,” occurs.

**8.** *And these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*

They are saved by faith; let them be careful to maintain good works. "These things are good and profitable unto men," that is, to those who practice and observe them.

**9.** *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.*

There are hundreds of questions, which are thought by some people to be very important, but which have no practical bearing whatever, either upon the glory of God, or upon the holiness of man. We are not to go into these matters; let those who have time to waste take up these questions; as for us, we have not time enough for things that are unprofitable and vain.

**10, 11.** *A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*

When it comes to unbelief of fundamental and vital doctrines, we who are like Titus, set in office over a church, must deal with such deadly evils with a strong hand.

**12, 13.** *When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.*

Paul had already told Titus to bid the saints in Crete to abound in good works; now he is commanded to take care of certain traveling Christians, and to speed them on their way. It was the custom in olden times, when traveling was very different from what it is now, when the Christians passed from one town to another, to find out the church, and to be entertained and speeded on their journey by their fellow-believers. Thus they kept up a practical fellowship of love to all the saints.

**14, 15.** *And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.*

May that final benediction drop like the dew upon this whole company! "Grace be with you all. Amen."

This exposition consisted of readings from TITUS 2:6-15, AND 3.

### TITUS 3

1. *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,*

You see, they were a rough, wild, rebellious people in Crete, and Christianity comes to civilize, to sober, to sanctify, to save.

2. *To speak evil of no man,*

Oh, how necessary is this exhortation even to this day!

2. *To be no brawler, but gentle, shewing all meekness, unto all men.*

Meekness and gentleness are two of the ornaments of our faith. I would that some professed Christians would understand that unholy contentiousness is not after the mind of Christ, it is not according to that gracious command, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls." No, the Christian must be willing to suffer wrongfully, and to bear it in patience; he is never to be one who renders evil for evil, or railing for railing.

3. *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish,*

Well, then, if other people are foolish, we ought to bear with them.

4. *Disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.*

That is what we were once; and if the grace of God has made a change in us, we must not boast, we must not censure others, we must not set up as self-righteous judges of others. Oh, no! our action must be the very reverse of all this.

4-7. *But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

This is a very practical Epistle. See how closely Paul keeps to the doctrines of grace. He is never like Mr. Legality, he never teaches that we are to be saved by works; but, being saved by the grace of God alone, and being made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, we are then, out of gratitude to God, to abound in

everything that is good, and holy, and kind, and after the mind of Christ.

**8, 9.** *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions,*

There are always plenty of thorn about, and there are certain professors who spend half their lives in fighting about nothing at all. There is no more in their contention than the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee; but they will divide a church over it, they will go through the world as if they had found out a great secret, it really is not of any consequence whatever, but having made the discovery, they judge everybody by their new-found fad, and so spread a spirit that is contrary to the Spirit of Christ.

**9, 10.** *And genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic-*

One who really turns aside from the truth, and sets up something contrary to the Word of God; what is to be done with him? "Burn him," says the Church of Rome. "Fine him, put him in prison," say other churches; but the inspired apostle says only this,-

**10.** *After the first and second admonition reject;*

Just exclude him from the church, that is all. Leave him his utmost liberty to go where he likes, believe what he likes, and do what he likes; but, at the same time, you as Christian people must disown him, that is all you ought to do, except to pray and labour for his restoration.

**11-14.** *Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing he wanting unto them. And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.*

How the apostle comes back to that point! Let all our people, our friends, our brethren, our kinsfolk, "let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."

**15.** *All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.*

Amen.



# PHILEMON

## PHILEMON

1. *Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, —*

This is one of Paul's private letters, though it has the stamp of inspiration upon it. It was not written concerning church business, nor to teach some great doctrinal truth, but there was a runaway slave who had come to Rome, and who had been converted under Paul's ministry, and Paul was sending him back to his master; and this was the letter which he was to take with him, to make some sort of apology for him, and to ask his master to receive him with kindness, and to forgive his fault. Every word of this Epistle is very wisely put. Paul begins by calling himself "a prisoner of Jesus Christ." Who would not grant him his desire when he was wearing a chain for Christ's sake? If a letter were to come to you from some beloved minister, whom you knew to be lying in a dungeon and likely soon to die, you would be greatly touched if you noticed the traces of the rust of his fetters on the letter. "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ," —

1, 2. *And Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, and to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:*

He joins Timothy with himself, to give double weight to the message. Probably Timothy was well known to Philemon, and much respected by him, so he puts Timothy's name that there might be two to plead with him. Then, notice the loving titles with which Paul addresses Philemon: "our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer." Probably the person whom Paul called "beloved Apphia" was Philemon's wife, so he writes to her also. Perhaps the wife was the more tender-hearted of the two, and might put in a good word for Onesimus, and her husband would all the more readily grant Paul's request. He also mentions Archippus, who was either the pastor of the church at Colosse, or an evangelist who stayed occasionally at the house of Philemon. So he mentions him with all the rest of the

household who met there for worship, and so made up the church in the house.

**3-7.** *Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.*

Paul recalls how much Philemon had done in the comforting of persecuted and poor saints. And when you are about to ask a favor of anyone, it is well to show your gratitude for what you or others have already received from him.

**8, 9.** *Therefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.*

He says in effect, "I am an apostle, and I am your spiritual father, so I might have spoken with authority to you, and have said, 'It is your duty to do this;' but I am not going to do anything of the kind. I am going to plead with you, and beseech it of you as a kindness and a favor. Pay a loving tribute to my old age; and beside that, I am a prisoner shut up in the dungeon for Christ's sake; hear the clanking of my chains, and grant my request for love's sake."

**10.** *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:*

"He came to hear me preach in the prison. He has been listening to me while I am still a captive, and he has been given to me, as another son in the gospel, to be a comfort to me in my bonds. I beseech you for him."

**11, 12.** *Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent again:*

"He was thy slave, and therefore I have sent him back to thee."

**12.** *Thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:*

"Look upon him as though he were my very heart, and receive him as you would receive me if I could go to you."

**13, 14.** *Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.*

“I would have kept him,” says Paul, “for I need someone to be my companion, to comfort me in my distress; but I would not do it without asking your leave, lest I should seem to take advantage of you. Though I know that you would willingly consent to it, yet, nevertheless, that it might be perfectly voluntary on your part, I have sent him back to you, that you may do as you will with him.”

**15-17.** *For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner,--*

“If thou hast true fellowship and communion with me,” —

**17.** *Receive him as myself.*

How beautifully this is put all through! It very much reminds me of our Lord Jesus Christ, who seems to say to the Divine Father, “This poor child is in fellowship with me. Receive him, therefore, as myself;” and this is just what God does in the case of repenting and believing sinners; he receives them just as if he could see Christ in them.

**18.** *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;*

How generously this is put by this poor prisoner at Rome, and how gloriously, in this, he is like our Master, who stands as Surety for us!

**19.** *I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.*

Paul had been the means of Philemon’s conversion, so he was immeasurably in debt to the apostle; but Paul only gently reminds him of the fact as a reason why he should deal kindly with Onesimus for his sake.

**20.** *Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.*

“You have refreshed others, then, surely, you will not let me be without refreshment now You have been very kind to all sorts of saints; then you cannot be unkind to the man who is your own spiritual father.”

**21.** *Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.*

This is delicately yet forcibly put, and we feel certain that Philemon must have done as Paul wished, even though we have no record of the fact.

**22-25.** *But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

# HEBREWS

## HEBREWS 1:1-14

Hebrews 1. In this chapter our Saviour's glorious person is very plainly set before us, and it is made the ground of our faith, and a reason why we should give the more earnest heed to his words, lest at any time we should let them slip.

**1, 2.** *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,*

The best last is ever God's rule. "Thou hast kept the best wine until now." Prophets are a very blessed means of communication, but how much more sure, how much more condescending is it for God to speak to us by his Son!

**2, 3.** *Whom he hath appointed heir of all thing, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

You see, dear friends, how glorious was his original — the "express image" of his Father's person. How lowly did he become to purge away our sins and that by himself, too, using his own body to be the means, by his sufferings, of taking away our guilt. Not by proxy did he serve us, but by himself. Oh, this is wondrous love! And then see the glory which followed after the shame. He has now ascended up on high, and sits down at the right hand of God's great Majesty. Follow him, believer, follow him with the eye of thy faith; let thy soul lovingly track him in his upward march, and as thou seest him, say — "He is my Lord and my God," and know that all that he did and all that he is, he is, and he did for thee.

**4, 5.** *Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day*

*have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?*

They are servants, but they are not sons, they are created, but they are not begotten. You see what he says to the Son — “I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.

**6-8.** *And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*

So you perceive that Christ is no created angel. He is sometimes compared to an angel. He is sometimes called the angel of the covenant, but he is not a created angel. He is higher in nature, higher in rank, higher in intellect, and higher in power than they. He is nothing less than very God of very God. The very man who suffered on Calvary.

“This is the man, the exalted man,  
Whom we unseen adore.”

**9.** *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

As man Christ claims all men as his fellows, but as God he counts it no robbery to be thought equal to God. As man he is most truly man, and only superior to man by reason of the purity of his birth and the perfection of his nature, and the exaltation of his manhood by God; as God he is nothing less than God, though he took upon himself the nature of men.

**10-12.** *And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.*

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

**13, 14.** *But to which of the angels, said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all*

*ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 10:1-30 AND HEBREWS 1:1-14.

## **HEBREWS 2**

**1.** *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

That is to say, because Jesus is so great, because the truths which he came to reveal are so infinitely important, “therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip;” for, sometimes, we seem to let them slip. We grow old; our mind is dull; our heart is occupied with other matters, and we let these heavenly things leak out, or drift by us, as if we were not concerned in them.

**2, 3.** *For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; —*

Hark: “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” Not if we resist it, reject it, despise it, oppose it; but if we neglect it. If a man is in business, it is not necessary that he should commit forgery in order to fail; he can fail by simply neglecting his business. If a man is sick, he need not commit suicide by taking poison; he can do it just as surely by neglecting to take proper medicines. So is it in the things of God, neglect is as ruinous as distinct and open opposition: “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: “ —

**3, 4.** *Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

Observe, then, that this gospel comes to us by Christ, and it is confirmed to us by his apostles, and further confirmed by those signs and wonders, and divers miracles, which God sent as the seals of apostolic teaching; so that this spell is not one about which we can raise any question whatever. It comes by a medium which we must not dare to question, it has confirming seals in it which it is blasphemous for us to dispute. Oh, how gladly should we receive it! How tenderly should we treat it? How devoutly grateful should we

be for it; and how earnestly should we comply with all its requirements?

**5.** *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.*

God has not made angels to be the preachers of the gospel. Doubtless they derive some happiness from it, if only from the sight of those converted under it; but it is in no sense under the government of angels.

**6-8.** *But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.*

It is so, in a measure, in the natural world. Man is made to be the master of it, and the ox and the horse, with all their strength, must bow their necks to man; and the lion and the tiger, with all their ferocity, must still be cowed in the presence of their master. Yet this is not a perfect kingdom which we see in the natural world. But, in the spiritual world, man is still to be supreme for the present, and therefore Christ becomes, not an angel, but a man. He takes upon him that nature which God intends to be dominant in this world and in that which is to come.

**8.** *For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.*

We see not yet man the master of everything, not even Christ, the model man, the Head of all men. While he was here below, he was not a ruling Lord, but a suffering servant. He said to his disciples, "I am among you as he that serveth." Yet it is in him that the dominion once given to man is to be seen most clearly displayed.

**9.** *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour;*

We see that by faith. We see Jesus, not merely as God, but as the God-man exalted "far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion."

**9, 10.** *That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

Not that Christ needed to be made perfect in nature, but perfect in his capacity to be the Captain of our salvation, complete in all the offices which he sustains toward his redeemed people. He must be a sufferer that he may be a sympathizer; and hence his sufferings made him perfect.

**11.** *For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one:*

He who sets them apart and they who are set apart “are all of one.” They are of one nature, and they have one destiny before them.

**11.** *For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,*

Does not this bring very sweetly before you the close relationship of Christ to his people? He has espoused their nature, and he owns it by calling them brethren.

**12.** *Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of thy church will I sing praise unto thee.*

The apostle was writing to Hebrews, and therefore he quoted from the books with which they were familiar. He here quotes the 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm as the words of the Messiah.

**13.** *And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*

There are some passages which we should never have thought related to the Messiah if the New Testament had not told us that they do. Hence I have no doubt that we much more often err in not seeing Christ in the Old Testament than in seeing him there, for there may be many other passages besides those which are supposed to speak of Christ which do speak of him.

**14.** *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; —*

By his own death, Christ broke that evil power which brought death into the world with its long trail of woe. He did this, not by his

example, not even by his life, but by his death. Therefore let those who speak slightingly of his atoning sacrifice see their folly, for it is through death that Christ destroys “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;” —

**15, 16.** *And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.*

Christ’s great mission was not to save angels, but to save men. Therefore he came not in the nature of angels, but in the nature of men.

**17, 18.** *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”*

And this is the reason why he suffered, and why he became a man capable of suffering, that he might be able to succour the tempted. It was for this that Christ left heaven, for this he was born of the virgin, for this he lived, for this he died, that he might be “able to succour them that are tempted.”

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 2, 3.

## **HEBREWS 2**

**1.** *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

It is well to give heed to what you are now hearing, but it is also important to give heed to what you have heard. Oh, how much have we heard, but have forgotten! How much have we heard, which we still remember, but do not practice! Let us therefore listen to the words of the apostle here: “We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip;” — as it were, slipping through our fingers, and flowing down the stream of time to be carried away into the ocean of oblivion.

**2.** *For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;*

See, brethren, the punishment for disobeying the word spoken by angels was death; what, then, must be the penalty of neglecting the great salvation wrought by the Divine Redeemer himself? He who does not give earnest heed to the gospel treats with disdain the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will have to answer for that sin when the King shall sit upon the throne of judgment. Trifle not, therefore, with that salvation which cost Christ so much, and which he himself brings to you with bleeding hands. And, oh! if you have hitherto trifled with it, and let it slip, may you now, be brought to a better mind, lest haply, despising Christ, the “just recompence of reward” should come upon you. And what will that be? I know of no punishment that can be too severe for the man who treats with contempt the Son of God, and tramples on his blood; and every individual who hears the gospel, and yet does not receive Christ as his Saviour, is committing that atrocious crime.

**3.** *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation;*

If we neglect that salvation, is there any other way by which we can be rescued from destruction? Is there any other door of escape if we pass that one by? No, there is none.

**3, 4.** *Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

This gospel of ours is stamped with the seal of God; he has set his mark upon it, to attest its genuineness and authority. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were the seal that the gospel was no invention of man, but that it was indeed the message of God. Gifts of healing, gifts of tongues, gifts of miracles of divers kinds, were God’s solemn declaration to man, “This is the gospel; this is my gospel which I send to you; therefore, refuse it not.”

**5.** *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.*

We have no angelic preachers; we sometimes speak of “the seraphic doctor,” but no seraph ever was a preacher of the gospel of the grace of God; that honour has been reserved for a lower order of beings.

**6.** *But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

God speaks to men by men. He has made them to be the choice and chosen instruments of his wondrous works of grace upon earth. Oh, what a solemn thing it is to be a preacher of the everlasting gospel! It is an office so high that an angel might covet it, but one that is so responsible that even an angel might tremble to undertake it. Brethren, pray for us who preach, not merely to a few, but to many of our fellow-creatures, that we may be the means, in the hand of God, of blessing to our hearers.

**7, 8.** *Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.*

It was so with Adam in his measure. Before he fell, through his disobedience, all the animals which God had made were inferior to him, and owned him as their lord and master. It is infinitely more so in that second Adam who has restored to humanity its lost dignity, and, in his own person, has elevated man again to the head of creation: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet."

**8.** *For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.*

Man does not yet rule the world. Wild beasts defy him. Storms vanquish him. There are a thousand things not at present submissive to his control.

**9.** *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

Thus lifting man back into the place where he first stood so far as this matter of dominion is concerned.

**10.** *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

Is it not wonderful that the Christ, who is the head over all things, could not be perfected for this work of ruling, or for the work of saving, except by sufferings? He stooped to conquer. Not because

there was any sin in him, but that he might be a sympathetic Ruler over his people, he must experience sufferings like those of his subjects; and that he might be a mighty Saviour, he must be himself compassed with infirmity, that he might “have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.” Brothers and sisters, do you expect to be made perfect without sufferings? It will never be so with you.

The path of sorrow, and that path alone,  
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.

We shall never be fit for the Heavenly Canaan unless we first pass through the wilderness. There are certain things about us which require this, so thus it must be.

**11.** *For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one:*

One family; one by nature with Christ our glorious Head.

**11.** *For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,—*

Oh, this blessed condescension of Christ! We are often ashamed of ourselves; alas! we are sometimes so base as to be ashamed of him; but he is never ashamed to call us brethren.

**12.** *Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.*

Christ, the center of the celestial chairs, is also the center of all the bands of true singers that are yet here below.

**13.** *And again, I will put my trust in him.*

This is our Lord Jesus Christ putting his trust in the Father, overcoming by faith, even as we do. Oh, what a marvellous oneness there is here between Christ and his people! Well might the apostle say that “both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.”

**13, 14.** *And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;*

We know what it is to be partakers of flesh and blood; we often wish that we did not. It is the flesh that drags us down; it is the flesh that brings us a thousand sorrows. I have a converted soul, but an unconverted body. Christ has healed my soul, but he has left my body still to a large extent in bondage, and therefore it has still to

suffer; but the Lord will redeem even that. The redemption of the body is the adoption, and that is to come at the day of the resurrection. But think of Christ, who was a partaker of the Eternal Godhead, condescending to make himself a partaker of flesh and blood; — the Godhead linked with materialism; the Infinite, an infant; the Eternal prepared to die, and actually dying! Oh, wondrous mystery, this union of Deity with humanity in the person of Christ Jesus our Lord! Why did he become a partaker of flesh and blood, and die upon the cross?

Listen:

**14.** *That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

That, through dying, he might overthrow Satan's power for all who trust him.

**15-18.** *And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to Make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

Glory be to his holy name for ever and ever! Amen.

## **HEBREWS 2:1-15**

**1.** *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

We have heard them; do not let us forget them. Let them not be like the driftwood which goes floating down the stream. Let us make a desperate effort to retain them in our memories; and, above all, to ponder them in our hearts.

**2, 3.** *For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; —*

They could not trifle with the angels' message without receiving just punishment from God. Much less, then, can we trifle with Christ's gospel. We have not an angelic saviour; but God himself, in the person of his Son, has deigned to be the Mediator of the new

covenant. Therefore, let us see to it that we do not trifle with these things. You see, dear friends, that we need not be great open sinners in order to perish; it is merely a matter of neglect. See how it is put here: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" You need not go to the trouble of despising it, or resisting it, or opposing it; you can be lost readily enough simply by neglecting it. In fact, the great mass of those who perish are those who neglect the great salvation, —

**3.** *Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*

The apostles and the other followers of our Lord constantly bore witness to his miracles and his resurrection.

**4.** *God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

Those who doubt the truth of the gospel, or who say they do, are often found believing historical statements that are not half as well proved. A man sits down, and reads the book of the Gallic wars, and he believes that Julius Caesar wrote it; yet there is not a half or a tenth as much evidence to prove that he did write it as there is to prove that our Lord Jesus lived, and died, and rose again from the dead. The witness to the truth of these great matters of fact has been borne by God himself with signs, and wonders, and miracles. Honest and true men, apostles and others, have witnessed to them; and they have also been certified by Incarnate Deity, even by the Lord who deigned to speak to us by his Spirit. We cannot, therefore, trifle with this gospel without incurring most serious guilt.

**5.** *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.*

We are the preachers of it, — not the angels; and the great Author and Finisher of our faith is the Man Christ Jesus, — not an angel. We have not now the ministry of angels, but the ministry of men, by whom the Lord of the angels sends his messages to their fellows.

**6-8.** *But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels thou crownedst him*

*with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.*

This was the original status of man. God made him to be his vicegerent on earth; and he would still hold that position were it not that, since he has rebelled against his own Sovereign, even the beasts of the field take liberty to be rebellious against him. Man is not now in his original estate, and therefore he rules not now; and we see many men who are very far from being royal beings, for they are mean and groveling. Yet the glory of man is not all lost, as we shall see.

**8, 9.** *For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus,—*

Here is the representative Man who is supreme over all: “We see Jesus,”

**9.** *Who was made a little lower than the angels for suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

Oh, how glorious it is to realize our position in Christ, and to see how he has lifted us up, not merely to the place from which the first Adam fell, but he has made us stand so securely there that we shall not again descend around the ruins of the Fall! Glory be to his holy name!

**10, 11.** *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,—*

The Christ and the Christian are one, — the Man Christ Jesus and the men whom he redeemed are one. He has so become partaker of our nature that now we are one family, and he is not ashamed to call us brothers. Am I addressing any who are ashamed of Christ, or who are ashamed of God’s poor people, and who would not like to be known to be members of a poor church? Ah! how you ought to despise yourselves for having any such pride in your hearts, for Christ is not ashamed to call his people brethren! Oh, what wondrous condescension! He has done this many times in the Psalms, where he speaks of his brethren;

*12. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will sing praise unto thee.*

That is a quotation from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm.

*13. And again, I will put my trust in him.*

Thus entering into the very faith of his people.

*13, 14. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood,*

As you know to your cost, for perhaps you have aches and pains about you at this very moment. Verily, you are “partakers of flesh and blood.” Perhaps you are suffering from despondency and depression of spirit. If so, that reminds you that, however much you may, in spirit, sometimes soar to heaven, yet you are still “partakers of flesh and blood.”

*14, 15. He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

He so took upon himself flesh and blood as to die in our nature, that thus he might slay death, and might set us free from all fear of death. Do you not see that, if the representative Man, Christ Jesus, died, he also rose again, and that so also will all who are in him rise, too? If you are in him, you shall rise again. Therefore, fear not to lie down in your last sleep, for the trumpet shall awaken you, and your bodies shall be moulded afresh like unto his glorious body, and your soul and body together shall dwell in infinite bliss for ever. “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

### **HEBREWS 3 AND 4:1**

*1. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.” What wonderful titles! “Holy brethren,” made brethren in holiness and made holy in our brotherhood, -- “partakers of the heavenly calling” — called of God from among the worlds. Our occupation and our calling henceforth is to serve the Lord. Well, if you be holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, “Consider the Apostle

and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” Think much of Him. Remember who it is you follow, with whom you are brethren. If you think little of your Leader you will live but poor lives. Consider him, often think of him, try to copy him. With such a Leader what manner of people ought we to be?

**2, 3.** *Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.*

Moses was but a part of the house after all, a prominent stone in the building, but Christ is the builder, builder of the house, foundation, topstone of it. Think then much of him. Get an high idea of him as faithful unto God in everything. Moses kept the law and was a good example to Israel save in some point of weakness, but Christ perfectly carried out his Father’s commission, and he is worthy of more honour than Moses.

**4-6.** *For every house is builded by some man but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*

“But Christ as a Son” — far higher degree -- “Christ as a son over his own house,” of which he is the heir, of which he is even now the sole proprietor -- “whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” None are truly Christ’s but those who persevere in grace. Men may be nominally Christ’s, but they are not Christ’s house unless they hold fast to the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Temporary Christians are not really Christians.

**7, 8.** *Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*

You are his house, give him rest, do not provoke him. If you belong to him be holy, do not grieve him. If you are his house be not defiled: surely he should dwell in a holy place.

*9. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.*

Oh, children of God, you have some of you been more than forty years now in the Lord's service: do not vex him. You have been long called out of Egypt and brought into the separate place in this wilderness world: be careful to be fit for the Divine indwelling.

**10, 11.** *Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)*

God grant that none of this congregation may be of that mind, who having named the name of Christ and being known as his people, continue to grieve him one way and another, to put him to the test by their doubts to make him angry by their sins. No, God grant we may be of another sort lest he should lift his hand and swear, "They shall not enter into my rest."

**12.** *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

Here the charge is not to the outside world but to those whom he had called "holy brethren." He drops the word "holy" for there are some brethren so called who would not deserve that name, and to them he speaks very pointedly, "Take heed, take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief." And how will that be shown? By wandering off, one way or another, away from the living God. If your God is not a living God to you in whom you live and move and have your being, if he does not come into your daily life, but if your religion is a dead and formal thing, then you will soon depart.

**13, 14.** *But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;*

Not otherwise. Again I say they who do not hold on and hold out are not really partakers of Christ, but we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. Those that fly to this doctrine and that, unsettled spirits, wandering stars, mere meteors of the night, these are not Christ's, but we must hold the beginning of our faith steadfast unto the end.

**15.** *While it is said, today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.*

Twice over we are warned of this, to avoid hardness of heart. God save us from ossification of heart, petrification of heart, till we get a heart of love or a heart of stone-may God save us from this.

**16.** *For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.*

There were two; it was a slender remnant that were faithful.

**17.** *But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?*

God speaks very lovingly of the bodies of his saints but see how he speaks of the bodies of apostates, “whose carcasses” as if they were no better than so many brute beasts, “whose carcasses fell in the wilderness.”

**18.** *And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?*

Sinning and not believing seem to go together. The 17<sup>th</sup> verse asks the same question as the 18<sup>th</sup>, but the answer is different. “With them that had sinned” says the 17<sup>th</sup> verse, “to them that believed not” says the 18<sup>th</sup> verse. Want of faith brings want of holiness, and when we abide in the faith we abide in obedience.

**19.** *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

**4:1.** *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.*

I left out the “us” because that is inserted by the translators and should not be there. The promise is left to somebody, it does not say to us -- “a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” Not come short of it but even seem to do so. God keep us from the very shadow of sin, from the very appearance of evil. “For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them.” In the old time that gospel which was preached to them was preached to us -- “but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” God send us this holy mixture of the hearing and the believing, to our hour’s salvation, to his glory. Amen.

### HEBREWS 3

1. *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.*

Would God we considered him more! He is supremely worthy of our perpetual consideration from all points of view. And the more you consider him the more you may, for there is a depth and breadth about his wondrous personality, his work, and his offices well worthy of our deepest thought and admiring worship. Holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, we may well consider him.

2-4. *Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.*

The translators were obliged to supply the word man, and yet it is not correct. It is only half the matter; for behold Christ is God and man in one ever blessed person, and, therefore, was he counted worthy of more glory than Moses.

5, 6. *And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*

We are the house in which he dwells with delight — in which he finds comfort and rest. We are the household over which he rules, and in which he is the delight of us all. Oh! may our church ever be such a house, so well ordered, that when the Lord cometh into it — nay, when he ever dwelleth in it — he may not be grieved in his own house. Whatever trouble a man has, he hopes to find solace at home. And so let the house of God be the house of Jesus — the place where there is peace, obedience, love, holiness.

7-9. *Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, today if ye will hear his voice. Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.*

That was a house in which it was hard to dwell. It had been Moses' prayer, "if thy presence go not with us, carry us not up

hence”; and the curtains had been spread for God’s abode, and there was the holy place. But, oh! their provocations made it an uneasy house for the Lord of the house, which ultimately he left, rending its veil from the top to the bottom as he left it, for it was finished, and he had done with it.

**10.** *Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.*

They do err; they did always err in their heart. God is very tender to errors of judgment — errors of the head. But to err in the heart — this is the heart of erring, and very provoking to the Most High; and for it always to be so after having tasted the bitter fruit of erring — after having known God’s angers on account of previous errors — oh! this was sad! “They do always err in their heart.” The foundation of sin often lies, however, in ignorance — “They have not known my ways.” Ignorance can never be of any benefit to us. “That the soul be without knowledge is not good.” But ignorance of God is the constant course of the errors of the heart. “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord,” is a very gracious promise, and where it is carried out, there the errors are rectified by the grace of God.

**11.** *So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)*

What a dreadful warning this is to us! If God has had forty years’ patience with you, take heed, sinner, take heed, lest he swear in his wrath that ye shall not enter into his rest, for your entrance into that rest depends upon his good will and pleasure. He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion. If, then, you provoke him to swear that you shall not enter into his rest, into that rest you never can enter, for then the gates of hell are barred upon you, and the gates of heaven fast locked against you. Beware, then, lest ye provoke him.

**12.** *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

That is the thing that provokes God — unbelief; not so much the unbelief of the head, as the unbelief of the heart, when the heart will not yield to the plan of salvation, when men want to be saved by their own works, or else are indifferent altogether about whether they are saved or not. It is heart-unbelief that damns men. It is heart-

faith that is the means of salvation. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; but heart-unbelief leadeth to, and seals his, ruin.

**13.** *But exhort one another daily.*

In opposition to their always erring, do you be always exhorting, and you cannot do that with any face unless you are always watching that you do not err yourselves; but when, walking yourselves near with God, you exhort one another, it is well. “Exhort one another daily.”

**13.** *While it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

If sin were to come to us labeled as sin, I trust we should reject it; but there is a deceitfulness of sin. It sometimes comes as a necessary action. We think that wisdom demands that we should sin a little sometimes to avoid some great evil; and in this way the soul gets hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Oh! if the devil would come in the shape of a devil, he would do little mischief, but he assumes the fashion of an angel of light, and there it is that he causes us so much sin and sorrow.

**14.** *For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.*

It is not true that one act of faith is all that is required; except you will consider that one act to be continuous throughout life. If a man were a believer once, and if that were possible to cease to be so, then, of course, he is ruined; but the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints speaketh not on that wise, but it saith that he who is a believer shall continue so — that he who is right with God shall abide so even to the end; and unless it be so we are not partakers of Christ at all. We are made partakers of Christ if we “hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.”

**15, 16.** *While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke:*

There are many such, and there are no sinners who provoke God so much as there who hear the gospel. A man who never hears the gospel at all may provoke God, but the man that sins after he has heard it again and again, and again, and has the sound of it ringing in his ears, provokes God with a sevenfold degree of provocation.

**16.** *Howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.*

No, but all but two. Yes, but the Lord will not forget two. There were only a mere handful — in Sodom, but the Lord would not consume them with the wicked. They were brought out of it; and so here, if there be only two, the Holy Spirit takes care to be very accurate in the counting of God’s elect ones; and he says, “Howbeit, not all that come out of Egypt by Moses.” If you are one of a family, and two of a city, he will take you and bring you into Zion. You may be in so great a minority that in all your acquaintance there may not be one godly person; yet the Holy Ghost will not take the matter in the lump, but he will choose you out, and mark you out, and distinguish you. Do you not notice how careful he was when he spoke about Judas — the good Judas? He says, “Not Iscariot.” No, no; he will not have him mistaken for that traitor. He guards the names of his people, each one of them, if there be but one — and two, if there be but two. “Howbeit not all that come out of Egypt by Moses.” God has an election according to grace. Doubtless there are some here now who will no longer provoke God, but who, constrained by sovereign love, will throw down all the weapons of their rebellion, and yield themselves up to him. May it be your case; may it be your case sinner, even at this moment.

**17.** *But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?*

How he speaks of them, and calls them “carcasses”! He never speaks of his children so; and you remember that in the Old Testament the unredeemed man is comparable to the ass. “Thou shalt not redeem him; thou shalt break his neck”; but the redeemed man is comparable to the sheep. Valuable property is in him, and God esteems him. “Whose carcasses fell in the wilderness.”

**18, 19.** *And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

It is those who believe not who have God’s curse. If you do not rest upon Christ as your salvation, you, too, shall hear God swear that you shall not enter into his rest.

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 3; 4:1-9.

### HEBREWS 3

**1.** *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

Think of him, think how great he is, think what attention he deserves from all who believe in him.

**2-6.** *Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house;*

See the superiority of Christ to Moses; Moses is honoured by being called the servant of God, but Jesus is the Son of God, and as Son, Master over his own house.

**6.** *Whose house are we,*

Christ built the house; he laid us together like stones upon the great foundation, Moses is but a caretaker in the house.

**6.** *If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope from unto the end.*

Final perseverance is an absolute necessity of a child of God. We do not prove ourselves to be a part of the house if we move about like loose stones.

**7-10.** *Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.*

Do not provoke your God by your quibbling, or your murmuring, or your idolatry; act not as those unbelievers did who died in the wilderness.

**11, 12.** *So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

There was that “evil heart” in the Israelites, is there not a danger that it may be in you also who are partakers of the like nature?

**13.** *But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

If sin came to you openly proclaiming itself as sin, you would fight against it; but it is very cunning and deceitful and it gradually petrifies the heart and especially the heart of those who think that they will never provoke God by their sin. Pride has already begun to work in them; and where pride can work, every other sin finds elbow-room. God save us from the deceitfulness of sin!

**14.** *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.*

You are to hold fast, to hold on, and to hold out to the end; and the grace you need in order to do this is waiting for you if you will but look for it and daily live under the power of it.

**15, 16.** *While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.*

All but two that came out of Egypt died in the wilderness; only Joshua and Caleb were faithful among the faithless found.

**17.** *But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?*

See how the apostle speaks of them; he does not say that their bodies were buried, but that their carcasses fell, in the wilderness. Unbelief degrades us into beasts whose carcasses fall beneath the poleaxe of judgment. Oh, that we might all be rid of unbelief, that degrading, desecrating, defiling, destroying thing!

**18, 19.** *And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

It was not the sons of Anak that kept them out, it was not the waste howling wilderness; it was nothing but their own unbelief.

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 2, 3.

## **HEBREWS 3:1-16**

**1.** *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus: —*

Oh, that he had more consideration at our hands! Consider him; you cannot know all his excellence, all his value to you, except he is the subject of your constant meditation. Consider him; think of his nature, his offices, his work, his promises, his relation to you: “Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;” —

**2.** *Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.*

See how our Lord Jesus Christ condescended to be appointed of the Father. In coming as a Mediator, taking upon himself our humanity, he “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,” and being found in fashion as a servant, we find that he was faithful; to every jot and tittle, he carried out his charge.

**3.** *For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.*

And Moses was but one stone in the house. Though in a certain sense he was a servant in it, yet in another, and, for him, a happier sense, he was only a stone in the house which the Lord Jesus Christ had builded. Let us think of our Lord as the Architect and Builder of his own Church, and let our hearts count him worthy of more glory than Moses; let us give him glory in the highest. However highly a Jew may think of Moses, — and he ought to think highly of him, and so ought we, — yet infinitely higher than Moses must ever rise the incarnate Son of God.

**4.** *For every house is builded by some; —*

By someone or other; —

**4.** *But he that built all things is God.*

And Christ is God; and he is the Builder of all things in the spiritual realm, — ay, and in the natural kingdom, too, for “without him was not anything made that was made.” So he is to have eternal honour and glory as the one great Master-builder.

**5, 6.** *And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*

You see, then, that the apostle had first made a distinction between Christ and Moses on the ground of, the Builder being greater than the house he builds; now, in the second place, he shows Christ's superiority to Moses on the ground that a son in his own house is greater than a servant in the house of his master. How sweetly he introduces the truth that we are the house of Christ! Do we realize that the Lord Jesus Christ dwells in the midst of us? How clean we ought to be, how holy, how heavenly! How we should seek to rise above earth, and keep ourselves reserved for the Crucified! In this house, no rival should be permitted ever to dwell; but the great Lord should have every chamber of it entirely to himself. Oh, that he may take his rest within our hearts as his holy habitation; and may there be nothing in our church life that shall grieve the Son of God, and cause him even for a moment to be withdrawn from us: "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Perseverance — final perseverance — is the test of election. He whom God has chosen holds on and holds out even to the end, while temporary professors make only a fair show in the flesh, but, by-and-by, their faith vanishes away.

**7. Wherefore —**

Now comes a long parenthesis: —

**7-11.** *(As the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)*

Oh, that none of us, as professors of the faith of Christ, may be like Israel in the wilderness! I fear there is too much likeness; God grant that it may be carried no further! May we hear the voice of God, as they did not hear it, for their ears were dull of hearing! May we never harden our hear as they did, for they kicked against the

command of God, and rebelled against the thunders of Sinai! May God grant that we may never tempt him, as they did, when they were continually proposing to God to do other than he willed to do, — something for their gratification which would not have been right, and which therefore he did not do! Oh, that we might never grieve him as they did, for they grieved him forty years! He bore with them, and yet they bored him. He forgave and overlooked their errors only to be provoked by the repetition of them, for they would not know what God made very plain. His works were such that, the wayfaring men might have read them; but they did not know God's ways, and at last he banished them from all participation in His rest. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and they entered not into the land of promise. "Wherefore" —

**12, 13.** *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

Watch over each other as well as over yourselves. Take heed lest sin hardens you before you are aware of it; even while you fancy that you have wiped it out by repentance, petrification will remain upon your heart "through the deceitfulness of sin."

**14-16.** *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; while it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.*

Not all, for there were two faithful ones. See how the Spirit of God gathers up the fragments that remain. If there are but two faithful ones out of two million, he knows it, and he records it.

## **HEBREWS 4**

**1.** *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest any of you should seem to come short of it.*

Not only dread coming short, but dread the very appearance of it. Oh, that we might now enter into that rest, and so clearly enjoy it that there should not even be a seeming to come short of it.

*2. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

They were not united to it by faith; consequently, as they did not receive the Word, it was taken away from them.

*3. For we which have believed do enter into rest.*

Faith brings us into this rest, even as unbelief shut them out.

*3. As he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

That is God's rest, the rest of a finished work, and into that rest many never enter. The work by which they might live for ever, the finished work by which they might be saved, they refuse, and so they never enter into God's rest.

*4, 5. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.*

There are many professing Christians who do not understand what it is to rest because the work of salvation is done; they do not even seem to know that the work is done. They understand not that dying word of the Lord Jesus, "It is finished." They think there is something still to be added to his work to make it effectual; but it is not so.

*6-8. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day saying in David, Today after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear the voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.*

We read of this in the 95<sup>th</sup> Psalm, where David was urging those to whom he was writing to hear God's voice, and not be like the unbelievers in the wilderness, so that the rest still remained to be entered upon by somebody. Joshua had not given them rest, or else David would not have spoken of entering into rest.

*9, 10. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath cease from his own works, as God did from his.*

He says, "It is finished. I am no longer going to do my own works, I am done with them; I now trust the finished work of Christ, and that gives me rest. But as to all that wearied me before, and made life a continual task and toil, it is ended now." God is not a cruel taskmaster to his people; he gives rest to those who trust in him, and some of us have entered into that rest.

**11.** *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

Let us not repeat the story of unbelieving Israel in our own lives, let us not live and die in the wilderness, but let us go in and take possession of the promised land, the promised rest, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**12.** *For the word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

This verse may be interpreted with reference to the incarnate Word or to the inspired Word, and they are so closely united and related to one another that we need not attempt to separate them, but see Christ in the Word, and the Word in Christ, and learn that both Christ and the Word do for us all that the apostle here declares.

**13.** *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

However great a revealer the Word may be, however clear a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, the God who gave the Word is even more so.

**14.** *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

Shall we desert him now that he has gone into heaven to represent us, now that he has fought the fight, and won the victory on our behalf, and gone up to heaven as our Representative? God forbid!

**15, 16.** *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the*

*throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

### **HEBREWS 4:1-9**

**1.** *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.*

If you avoid the very seeming of it, you will avoid the thing itself. Oh! that we were careful about this — that there was nothing that should give any reasonable fear to those who observed us, or to ourselves when we search our hearts, lest we should not enter into this rest.

**2.** *For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

It must be mixed with faith. There are many drugs that are of no value till they are mixed with something else; and the Word preached becomes of no value to a soul until it is mixed with faith in them that hear it.

**3.** *For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

I leave out the intermediate words for the time being. “There is a rest.”

**9.** *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 3; 4:1-9.

### **HEBREWS 4:14-16**

**14.** *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

Why should we let it go? Jesus has triumphed, he has entered into the glory on our behalf, the victory on our account rests with him; therefore let us follow him as closely as we can. May he help us, just now, if we are in the least dispirited or cast down, to pluck up courage, and press on our way!

**15.** *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

How this ought to draw us to the Saviour, — that he was made like unto ourselves; that he knows our temptations by a practical experience of them; and though he was without sin, yet the same sins which are put before us by Satan were also set before him.

**16.** *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

We have a Friend at court; our Bridegroom is on the throne. He who reigns in heaven loves us better than we love ourselves. Come, then, why should we hesitate, wherefore should we delay our approach to his throne of mercy? What is it that we want at this moment? Let us ask for it. If it is a time of need, then we see clearly from this verse that it is a time when we are permitted and encouraged to pray.

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 4:14-16; and 5.

## **HEBREWS 5**

**1.** *For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:*

The high priest of old was “taken from among men.” Aaron was chosen, and then his son; an angel might have been sent to perform Aaron’s duty, but it was not so. And, glory be to our blessed Lord and Master, he is “One chosen out of the people,” “taken from among men.”

**2.** *Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.*

Christ was not compassed with sinful infirmity, but he was compassed with sorrowful infirmity. His were true infirmities or weaknesses; there was no evil about him, but still he had the infirmity of misery, and he had it even to a greater extent than we have. The high priest of old was a man like those for whom he stood as a representative, and our great High Priest is like unto us, though without sin.

**3.** *And by reason hereof he ought, —*

That is, the ordinary high priest, chosen from among men ought,

**3.** *As for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.*

But our Lord had no sins of his own. Do not, therefore, think that he is less sympathetic with us because he had no sins; far from it. Fellowship in sin does not create true sympathy, for sin is a hardening thing. If there are two men, who are guilty partners in sin, they never really help each other, they have no true heart of kindness, either of them; but when the time of difficulty comes, each man looks to his own interest. The fact that Christ is free from sin, is a circumstance which does not diminish the tenderness of his sympathy with us, but rather increases it.

**4, 5.** *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.*

The text is quoted from the second Psalm, and it proves that Christ did not arrogate to himself any position before God. He is God's Son, not merely because he calls himself so, but because the Father says, "Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee." He took not this honour upon himself, but he was "called of God, as was Aaron.

**6.** *As he saith also in another place, —*

In the 110<sup>th</sup> Psalm, —

**6.** *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

He does not assume the office on his own account, but it is laid upon him. He comes not in as an amateur, but as an authorized priest of God.

**7.** *Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;*

This is to prove his infinite sympathy with his people, and how he was compassed with infirmity. Christ prayed. How near he comes to you and to me by this praying in an agony, even to a bloody sweat, with strong crying, and with weeping! Some of you know what that means, but it did, perhaps, seem to you that Christ could not know how to pray just so; yet he did. In the days of his flesh, he not only offered up prayer, but "prayers and supplications," — many of them, of different forms, and in different shapes, — and these were accompanied with "strong crying and tears." Possibly,

you have sometimes had a dread of death; so had your Lord, — not a sinful fear of it, but that natural and perfectly innocent, yet very terrible dread which comes to a greater or less extent upon every living creature when in expectation of death. Jesus also comes very near to us because he was not literally heard and answered. He said, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” But the cup did not pass from him. The better part of his prayer won the victory, and that was, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” You will be heard, too, if that is always the principal clause in your prayers; but you may not be heard by being delivered from the trouble. Even the prayer of faith is not always literally heard. God, sometimes, instead of taking away the sickness or the death, gives us grace that we may profit by the sickness, or that we may triumph in the hour of death. That is better than being literally heard; but even the most believing prayer may not meet with a literal answer. He “was heard in that he feared;” yet he died, and you and I, in praying for ourselves, and praying for our friends, may pray an acceptable prayer, and be heard, yet they may die, or we may die.

**8.** *Though he were a Son, —*

Emphatically, and above us all “a Son,” —

**8.** *Yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*

He was always obedient, but he had to learn experimentally what obedience meant, and he could not learn it by the things which he did; he had to learn it “by the things which he suffered;” and I believe that there are some of the most sanctified children of God who have been made so, by his grace, through the things which they have suffered. We may not all suffer alike, we may not all need the same kind of suffering; but I question whether any of us can truly learn obedience except by the things which we suffer.

**9.** *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*

“Being made perfect.” “What,” says one, “did Christ need to be made perfect?” Not in his nature, for he was always perfect in both his divine and his human nature; but perfect as a Saviour, perfect as a Sympathizer, above all, according to the connection, perfect as a High Priest. “Being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” Christ will not save those who refuse to obey him, those who will not believe in him; there

must be an obedient faith rendered unto him, or else the virtue of his passion and death cannot come to us.

**10.** *Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.*

It is a glorious mark of our Lord Jesus that he was “called of God an High Priest.” He did not assume this office to himself, but this high honour was laid upon him by God himself.

**11, 12.** *Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; —*

I hope it is not true of any of you, dear friends, but it is true of many Christians that they learn very little to any purpose, and always need to be going over the A B C of the gospel. They never get into the classics, the deep things of God; they are afraid of the doctrine of election, and of the doctrine of the eternal covenant, and of the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, for these truths are meant for men of full age, and these poor puny babes have not cut their teeth yet. They want some softer and more childlike food. Well, it is a mercy that they are children of God; it would be better, however, for them to grow so as to become teachers of others: “Ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; “ —

**12-14.** *And are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness : for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

Do not be frightened, you who have lately been brought into the Lord’s family. We are not going to feed you with meat yet; we shall be glad enough to serve you with milk for the present. At the same time, let us all be praying the Lord to make us grow, that we may know more, and do more, and be more what the Lord would have us to be. A child is a very beautiful object, an infant is one of the loveliest sights under heaven; but if, after twenty years, your child was still an infant, it would be a dreadful trial to you. We must keep on growing till we come to the stature of men in Christ Jesus. God grant that we may do so, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 4:14-16; and 5.

## HEBREWS 5

*1-5. For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.*

What a comfort this is to us, that we have a High Priest, through whom we can come to God, who is full of compassion toward us, and who, though he had no sinful infirmity about him, was subject to the infirmities to which flesh is heir!

*6-9. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect,*

That is, in his official character.

*9-14. He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

This exposition consisted of readings from JOHN 7:1-13; AND HEBREWS 5.

## HEBREWS 5

*1. For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:*

Notice that the high priests were taken from among men, not from among angels. Hence, our Lord Jesus Christ took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. The Jewish high priests were ordained for men; they acted on behalf of men, and they stood in the place of men. So the Lord Jesus Christ stood in the room, place, and stead of his people, that he might offer to God for them two things, — gifts, — that is, such offerings as the Jew made when he presented the fine flour, and oil, and other bloodless oblations which were only intended for thanksgiving. Christ offered thanksgiving unto his Father, and that offering was a sweet savor unto God. But beside those gifts, the priests offered sacrifices, and our Lord Jesus Christ did the same, for he was made a sin-offering for us, though he himself knew no sin.

*2. Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way;*

The marginal reading is, “Who can reasonably bear with the ignorant,” —that is, one who does not lose his temper even when they are very slow to learn what he teaches them. Having taught them nineteen times, and finding that they do not understand or remember the lesson, he is ready to teach them the twentieth time, he is one who will give them line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, because he has compassion on the ignorant. Then there were other who tried the high priest far more even than the ignorant did, they were those who erred from the right path, those who went out of the way, and who continued to do so even after many warnings and much earnest exhortation. The true priest must have patience with people of this sort.

*2. For that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.*

So all the high priests under the law were. They had to confess their own ignorance, they had to admit their own errings and wanderings, and therefore they could the more readily have patience with others. Our Lord Jesus Christ had neither ignorance nor sin of his own, but he has become so completely one with his people, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, that he can have compassion upon us, ignorant and out of the way as we may be. Are you distressed, my brethren and sisters, because you feel your own ignorance? Do you mourn because you have gone astray? You have to come to no angry Christ; you have to approach One who will be

very gentle toward you. Come boldly to him, then; confess your folly, and expect the pardon that he is waiting to bestow.

**3.** *And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.*

We know that, being compassed with infirmity and imperfection, the high priests first offered sacrifices on their own account, and then afterwards offered them on behalf of the people. Christ, being pure and holy, needed no sacrifice for himself; but he did offer a complete, and acceptable, and sufficient sacrifice for us.

**4.** *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*

Men could not constitute themselves high priests; for the appointment was made by God alone.

**5, 6.** *So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.*

Beloved, there is rich comfort for all believers in the fact that Christ is God's appointed and accepted High Priest. God ordained him to do what he has done, and is doing, and will do; and therefore it is impossible but that God should accept him and all his work.

**7, 8.** *Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*

Just as the earthly high priests offered sacrifices for themselves, so Christ, though he needed not to offer sacrifice for himself, did need to pray for himself. You know, beloved, how he gave himself unto prayer upon the cold mountains at midnight, and how Gethsemane's garden witnessed the bloody sweat falling in clots to the ground. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." God had one Son without sin, but he never had a son without suffering. We may escape the rod if we are not of the family of God, but the true-born child must not, and would not if he might, avoid that chastisement of which all such are partakers.

**9. *And being made perfect, —***

That is, perfect in his obedience, perfect as a sacrifice, perfect as the Mediator and Substitute for his people, —

**9. *He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;***

Brethren, what a grand expression that is, “eternal salvation”! You know that there are some who preach a temporary salvation; they say that you may be in Christ today and out of Christ tomorrow, that you may be saved by grace at one hour, but damned by sin the next. Ah! but the Bible says no such thing. This may be the gospel according to Arminius, but it is not the gospel according to John, nor according to Paul, nor according to our Lord Jesus Christ. That gospel is, —

“Once in Christ, in Christ for ever;  
Nothing from his love can sever.”

Christ became the author of “eternal salvation,” and the word “eternal” must mean without end; so that, if we once receive the salvation which Christ has wrought out, we are saved in time, and shall be saved throughout all eternity. Christ is the Author of this eternal salvation; not our good works, though our faith and our works become the evidences of our having received this eternal salvation.

**10. *Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.***

Then the apostle appeared to be going on to enlarge upon the Melchisedec priesthood, but he stopped. Perhaps he recollected what his Master said to his disciples on one occasion, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now.” In a similar fashion Paul writes: —

**11-14. *Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.***

## HEBREWS 6

In the previous chapter, Paul was writing to some who ought to have been teachers, but who needed still to be taught the first principles of the gospel; they were such babes in grace that they needed the milk of the Word, —the very simplest elements of gospel truth, — and not the strong meat of solid doctrine. The apostle, however, desires that the Hebrew believers should understand the sublimer doctrines of the gospel, and so be like men of full age who can eat strong meat. In this chapter he exhorts them to seek to attain to this standard.

1. *Therefore leaving the principles —*

The rudiments, the elementary truths, —

1. *Of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; —*

Let us go from the school to the university, let us have done with our first spelling-books, and advance into the higher classics of the kingdom.

1. *Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,*

Let us make sure that the foundation is laid, but let us not have continually to lay it again. Let us go on believing and repenting, as we have done; but let us not have to begin believing and begin repenting, let us go on to something beyond that stage of experience.

2. *Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*

Let us take these things for granted, and never dispute about them any more, but go on to still higher matters.

3. *And this will we do, if God permit.*

We must keep on going forward; there is no such thing in the Christian life as standing still, and we dare not turn back.

4-6. *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, —*

Note that Paul does not say, “If they shall fall;” but, “If they shall fall away,” — if the religion which they have professed shall cease to have any power over them, — then, it shall be impossible

*6. To renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*

If all the processes of grace fail in the case of any professors, what is to be done with them? If the grace of God does not enable them to overcome the world, — if the blood of Christ does not purge them from sin, what more can be done? Upon this supposition, God's utmost has been tried, and has failed. Mark that Paul does not say that all this could ever happen; but that, if it could, the person concerned would be like a piece of ground which brought forth nothing but thorns and briers.

*7, 8. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.*

If, after having ploughed this ground, and sown it, and after it has been watered by the dew and rain of heaven, no good harvest ever comes of it, every wise man would leave off tilling it. He would say, "My labour is all thrown away on such a plot of ground as this, nothing more can be done with it, for after having done my utmost nothing but weeds is produced, so now it must be left to itself." You see, my dear hearers, if it were possible for the work of grace in your souls to be of no avail, nothing more could be done for you. You have had God's utmost effort expended upon your behalf, and there remains no other method of salvation for you. I believe that there have been some professors, such as Judas and Simon Magus, who have come very near to this condition, and others who are said, after a certain sort, to have believed, to have received the Holy Spirit in miraculous gifts, and to have been specially enlightened so as to have been able to teach others; but the work of grace did not affect their hearts, it did not renew their natures, it did not transform their spirits, and so it was impossible to renew them to repentance. How notice what Paul says: —

*9. But, beloved, we are persuaded better thing of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.*

Harsh as the apostle's words may seem, they are not meant for you who are really believers in Christ, and in whom the Holy Spirit

has wrought a complete change of heart and life; Paul is not speaking of such as you.

**10.** *For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

If you have proved by your works that the grace of God is within you, God will not forget you; he will not leave you, he will not cast you away. You know the contrast in the speech between different persons concerning this doctrine. One will wickedly say, "If I am a child of God, I may live as I like." That is damnable doctrine. Another will say, "If I am a child of God, I shall not want to live as I like, but as God likes, and I shall be led by the grace of God into the path of holiness, and through divine grace I shall persevere in that way of holiness right to the end." That is quite another doctrine, and it is the true teaching of the Word of God.

**11.** *And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:*

Keep it up; be as earnest today as you were twenty years ago, when you were baptized and joined the church: "Show the same diligence unto the end." Still, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

**12-15.** *That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.*

Wherefore, brethren, you and I also are patiently to endure, to hold on even to the end, and God's sure promise will never fail us.

**16-18.** *For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*

It seems a great change in this chapter from the sad tone at the beginning to the joyous note at the end; but, indeed, there is no contradiction between the two. Paul is but giving us two sides of the truth, — both equally true, — the one needful for our warning, the other admirable for our consolation. God will not leave you, my brethren, he has pledged himself by covenant to you, and he has given an oath that his covenant shall stand. Wherefore, be of good courage, and press forward in the divine life, for your work of faith and labour of love are not in vain in the Lord; so let us “lay hold upon the hope set before us:” —

**19.** *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;*

Sailors throw their anchors downwards; we throw ours upwards. Their anchor goes within the veil of the waters into the depths of the sea; ours goes within the veil of glory, into the heights of heaven, where Jesus sits at the right hand of God: “within the veil;” —

**20.** *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

#### **HEBREWS 7:1-14**

**1, 2.** *For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace.*

His very names being instructive, Righteousness first, and Peace afterwards, as it is with our divine Lord, who has brought in everlasting righteousness, and speaks peace to guilty men.

**3.** *Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.*

Melchisedec just passed across the page; he has no predecessor, he has no successor. We see him in Scripture, and we know nothing of his descent we know nothing of his death; we only know that he was a priest of the Most High God; and this very silence about him is highly significant and instructive, far in this he is “like unto the Son of God, who abideth a priest continually.” Now consider who this great man was, unto whom even “the patriarch Abraham gave

the tenth part of his spoil.” If Abraham, the father of the faithful, the friend of God, paid tribute to him, how great must he have been, how high his office!

**5-7.** *And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.*

Therefore, Abraham was less than Melchisedec: he could not bless Melchisedec, but Melchisedec could bless him. How great, then, was he! How far greater still is that Lord of ours of whom Melchisedec was but a type

**8-10.** *And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.*

Thus the old priesthood, the Levitical and Aaronic priesthood, did homage unto the Melchisedec priesthood, which is greater still.

**11.** *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?*

We read in the psalm just now, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec,” which proves that the priests of the order of Levi were not sufficient: there was need of a still greater priesthood.

**12.** *For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.*

The law of the priesthood alters since the person of the priest, the character of the priest, and the very office of the priest had altered too.

**13.** *For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar*

According to the belief of the Jewish people, the Messiah was to come of the tribe of Judah, yet none of the house of David or of the

tribe of Judah ever presumed to present themselves as priests of the order of God.

*14. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.*

So there was an entire change of the priesthood, and of the law of priests.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 110:1-7; HEBREWS 7:1-14.

### **HEBREWS 7:15-28**

*15-18. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.*

The old Levitical law is disannulled; it became weak and unprofitable; and now a higher and better dispensation is ushered in with a greater and undying priesthood.

*19. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.*

That is all it did: it was a stepping-stone towards something better. “by which we draw near unto God.” “The Lord hath sworn and will not repent.”

*20-24. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest. (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, the Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better Testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

I think they reckoned that there were eighty-three high priests in regular succession from Aaron to the death of Phineas, the last high priest at the siege of Jerusalem. One succeeded another, but this one goes on continually, for ever hath an untransferable priesthood. That word “untransferable” is nearer to the meaning than this “unchangeable.” If any of you have old Bibles with the margin, you will see “hath a priesthood which cannot be passed from one hand to

another,” and the margin happens in this case to have the true rendering, “This man hath an untransferable priesthood.”

**25.** *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us,*

We want just that high priest who would live on throughout all the ages for ever to sustain his people, and do for them all they should need to have done for them, until time should have been no more.

**26-28.** *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: For this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*

There is our joy.

This exposition consisted of readings from HAGGAI 1-2:1-9; HEBREWS 7:15-28.

### **HEBREWS 8:7-13**

**7-13.** *For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

So the old covenant has vanished away, with all its types, and symbols, and sacrifices. As the morning mists dissolve upon the rising of the sun,- as darkness flies away when the light shines,-so has the covenant of works departed for ever; and, in its place, stands out the everlasting covenant of God's unmerited mercy to the most guilty and vile of the sons and daughters of men. May he graciously grant to us the privilege of having an interest in that covenant, for his dear Son's sake. Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from JEREMIAH 31:31-34; EZEKIEL 36:25-32; AND EBREWS 8:7-13

## **HEBREWS 9**

*1. Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.*

That is, a sanctuary belonging to this world, a visible sanctuary. That first covenant was to a large degree a thing of outward rites and ceremonies, which the new covenant is not; that is a covenant of spiritual and unseen realities.

*2-5. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.*

Because it was not his main purpose at that time, and he was writing an important Epistle upon the most vital truths and it would not do to encumber it with too many explanations.

*6-9. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priest went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;*

All these sacrifices and ceremonies, although full of instruction, were not in themselves able to give peace to the conscience of men. The new and better covenant does give rest to the heart by the real and actual taking away of guilt, but this the first covenant could not do. It is astonishing that there should be any who want to go back to the “beggarly elements” of the old Jewish law, and again to have priests, and an elaborate ritual, and I know not what besides. These things were faulty and fell short of what was needed even when God instituted them, for they were never intended to produce perfection, or to give rest to the troubled conscience; so of what use can those ceremonies be which are of man’s own invention, and which are not according to the new covenant at all?

**10-12.** *Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

Christ has entered into the true holy place, — not into that which was curtained with a veil, which was but a type, and which was put away when the veil was rent from the top to the bottom as Jesus died; he has entered into the immediate presence of God, and he has entered there once for all, “having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

**13, 14.** *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Do you all feel the power of that blood now ? Oh, what blessing it is to know that the conscience is quite at rest because of the purging wrought by Jesus’ blood! It is heaven begun below. We cannot serve God aright until we have been thus cleansed; nay, we dare not stand in that awful presence while the consciousness of sin is upon us; but when Jesus Christ saith to us, “Ye are clean,” then, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord

Jesus Christ.” Then have we “access with confidence” unto the Father through him.

**15-17.** *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgression that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*

Whether it be a covenant or a testament, death is necessary to make it valid. God’s covenants have ever been sanctioned and ratified with blood and the covenant or the testament of eternal grace is ratified with the blood of the Surety and Testator.

**18-26.** *Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

What Aaron could not do by entering into the holy place year after year, Christ has done by entering into heaven once; and there is no more need of a sacrifice for sin, and they are grossly guilty who pretend to offer Christ over again. The great work of redemption is finished; sin is put away, and there is no more remembrance of it. In the sight of God, Christ’s one sacrifice hath completed the expiation of sin, glory be to a holy name!

**27, 28.** *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

He shall come to complete the salvation of those for whom his precious sacrifice was offered all those hundreds of years ago.

Now let us read the passage to which Paul refers in verses 19 to 21.

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 9., AND EXODUS 24:1-10.

## **HEBREWS 9**

**1.** *Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.*

That is to say, a material sanctuary, a sanctuary made out of such things as this world contains. Under the old covenant, there were certain outward symbols. Under the new covenant, we have not the symbols, but we have the substance itself. The old law dealt with types and shadows, but the gospel deals with the spiritual realities themselves.

**2, 3.** *For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;*

All this was by divine appointment; the form of the rooms, the style of the furniture, everything was ordained of God; and that not merely for ornament, but for purposes of instruction. As we shall see farther on, the Holy Ghost intended a significance, a teaching, a meaning, about everything in the old tabernacle, whether it was a candlestick, or a table, or the shewbread.

**4, 5.** *Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.*

It would not have been to the point which the apostle had in hand, so he waived the explanation of those things for another time.

**6-8.** *Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.*

*But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying,*

It is from this sentence that I am sure that the Holy Ghost had a signification, a meaning, a teaching, for every item of the ancient tabernacle and temple; and we are not spinning fancies out of idle brains when we interpret these types, and learn from them important gospel lessons. "The Holy Ghost this signifying,"-

**8.** *That the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:*

It was necessary that you should take away the sacred tent, the tabernacle, ay, and take away the temple, too, before you could learn the spiritual meaning of them. You must break the shell to get at the kernel. So God had ordained. Hence, there is now no tabernacle, no temple, no holy court, no inner shrine, the holy of holies. The material worship is done away with, in order that we may render the spiritual worship of which the material was but the type.

**9.** *Which was a figure for the time then present,*

Only a figure, and only meant for "the time then present." It was the childhood of the Lord's people; it was a time when, as yet, the light had not fully broken in upon spiritual eyes, so they must be taught by picture-books. They must have a kind of Kindergarten for the little children, that they might learn the elements of the faith by the symbols, types, and representations of a material worship. When we come into the true gospel light, all that is done away with; it was only "a figure for the time then present."

**9.** *In which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;*

All these rites could only give a fleshly purity, but they could not touch the conscience. If men saw what was meant by the outward type, then the conscience was appeased; but by the outward sign itself the conscience was never comforted, if it was a living and lowly conscience.

**10.** *Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.*

These ordinances were only laid upon the Jews-not upon any other people-and only laid upon them until the better and brighter days of reformation and fuller illumination.

**11. *But Christ-Oh,***

how we seem to rise when we begin to get near to Him, away from the high priests of the Jews! "But Christ"-

**12. *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.***

The Jewish high priests went once a year into the Holy of Holies. Each year as it came round demanded that they should go again. Their work was never done; but "He entered in once," and only once, "into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." I love that expression, "eternal redemption"-a redemption which really does redeem, and redeems forever and ever. If you are redeemed by it, you cannot be lost; if this redemption be yours, it is not for a time, or for a season, but it is "eternal redemption." Oh, how you ought to rejoice in the one entrance within the veil by our great High Priest who has obtained eternal redemption for us!

**13-15. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.***

When you come to deal with Christ, you have to do with eternal things. There is nothing temporary about Him, or about His work. It is "eternal redemption" that He has obtained for us, it is an "eternal inheritance" that He has purchased for us.

**16, 17. *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.***

Or, "Where a covenant is, there must also be the death of him who covenants, or of that by which the covenant is established." Or

read it as we have it in our version, for it seems as if it must be so, although we are loathe to give the meaning of “testament” to the word, since its natural meaning is evidently covenant: “Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth”; or, if you will, while the victim that was to confirm the covenant lived, the covenant was not ratified; it must be slain before it could be thus effective.

**18-22.** *Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

There is no truth more plain than this in the whole of the Old Testament; and it must have within it a very weighty lesson to our souls. There are some who cannot endure the doctrine of a substitutionary atonement. Let them beware lest they be casting away the very soul and essence of the gospel. It is evident that the sacrifice of Christ was intended to give ease to the conscience, for we read that the blood of bulls and of goats could not do that. I fail to see how any doctrine of atonement except the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ can give ease to the guilty conscience. Christ in my stead suffering the penalty of my sin—that pacifies my conscience, but nothing else does: “Without shedding of blood is no remission.”

**23.** *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these;*

These things down below are only the patterns, the models, the symbols of the heavenly things; they could therefore be ceremonially purified with the blood which is the symbol of the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

**23, 24.** *But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with*

*hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

He never went within the veil in the Jewish temple; that was but the symbol of the true holy of holies. He has gone “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

*25-28. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;*

There is no need that He should die again, His one offering has forever perfected all His people. There remains nothing but His final coming for the judgment of the ungodly, and the acquittal of His redeemed.

*28. And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Christ’s second coming will be “without sin,” and without a sin offering, too, wholly apart from sin, unto the salvation of all His chosen. May we all be amongst those who are looking for Him! Amen.

## **HEBREWS 9:1-22**

*1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.*

An external sanctuary, a material structure, and therefore belonging to this world.

*2. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread: which is called the sanctuary.*

Or, “the Holy Place.”

*3-8. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when*

*these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the Second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:*

Notice especially those words, "Not without blood." There could be no approach to God under the old dispensation without the shedding of blood, and there is no access to the Lord now without the precious blood of Christ.

**9-22.** *Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testators. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the*

*ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

That is the great gospel truth that was set forth by all the sacrifices under the law: “without shedding of blood is no remission.”

This exposition consisted of readings from Leviticus 16:1-31; And Hebrews 9:1-22.

## **HEBREWS 9:18-28**

**18-22.** *Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

Under the law, some things were purified by fire or by water, but “almost all things” were “purged with blood;” and there was and still is, no remission of sin “without shedding of blood.”

**23-26.** *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

In every respect, our great High Priest was superior to the high priests under the law; though, in some points, they resembled him, and were types of him.

**27, 28.** *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

His one offering so fully met all the claims of divine justice on behalf of all his people that there was no need of another offering for sin, and no room for it, so his second coming will be “without a sin offering unto salvation,” as the passage may be rendered.

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 9:18-28; AND 10:1-25.

### **HEBREWS 9:24-28**

**24.** *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands,*  
Christ has not entered into any earthly temple or tabernacle.

**24-26.** *Which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once*

- And only once

**27.** *In the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

The Levitical priests continually repeated their sacrifice, for it was not effectual when offered only once; but our great High Priest has once for all presented a sacrifice which has made a full atonement for all his people’s sins, and there is therefore no need for it to be repeated.

**27.** *And as it is appointed unto men once to die,*

Notice how the apostle continues to introduce that important little key-word “once.”

**27, 28.** *But after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered -*  
Only once-

**28.** *To bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

May we be amongst the privileged company that look for him!

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 9:24-28; AND 10:1-18.

### **HEBREWS 9:24-28**

**24.** *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

He has gone within the veil;-not the veil of “blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work;” but within the

veil that hides “heaven itself” from our eyes, and there he is “in the presence of God for us.”

**25, 26.** *Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

The high priest brought the blood of the animals that were slain for a sin-offering, and hence he came often. He could not bring his own blood, or he would only have come once, but our Saviour has come only once, “to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself “

**27, 28.** *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

He had to suffer because of sin once, but he will never again have to do that; his sacrifice will never need to be repeated, and never can be repeated.

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 9:24-28; AND 10.

## **HEBREWS 10**

**1, 2.** *For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered”*

If the sacrifice had really put away sin, surely it would never have needed to be offered again. If one sacrifice had put away the guilt of Israel, there would have been no need to bring another.

**2.** *Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*

Once cleansed from sin, we are cleansed from sin; the great deed is done once for all,

**3-5.** *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world,*

You know who that is, there is but one great “HE” to us,-our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the true High Priest.

**5.** *He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:*

By the work of the Holy Ghost within the Virgin Mary, the blessed body of Christ was “prepared” so that he ought be God and man in one person, and so might bring an offering acceptable unto God.

**6-9.** *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither had pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.*

That he may bring in the real sacrifice of which the others were but types and prefigurations.

**10.** *By the which will-*

The will which Christ fulfilled in life and in death: “By the which will” —

**10.** *We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.*

Only one sacrifice was required. The key-word here is that little word “once.” Let it not only sound in your ears, but be written in your hearts. Jesus Christ died once, he brought his sacrifice once, he put away our sins once.

**11, 12.** *And every priest stinted daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

Christ stands no longer to minister as a sacrificing priest, he is sitting down on the right hand of God. That is the posture of one whose work is done, and who is taking his rest: “He sat down on the right hand of God

**13-18.** *From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into*

*their hearts, and in the minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, these is no more offering for sin.*

Sin itself being no longer imputed to any believer in Christ, there is neither the occasion nor the need for the offering of another sacrifice for sin. Christ's one sacrifice has for ever put away the sins of all who believe in him.

**19-22.** *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

The Jew could not personally go up to the mercy-seat; he had to go there through his representative, the high priest, and we have Christ as our "high priest over the house of God," so we come to God through him. The Israelite could not pass through the veil which hid from public gaze the glory of the Shekinah, and Jesus Christ's humanity was a veil which somewhat concealed the glory of his Deity; but the flesh of Christ having been crucified, the veil has been rent, and now we may come right up to the throne of God without trembling; nay, we may come even with holy boldness and familiarity, and speak to God without alarm. Having such a privilege as this, let us not neglect it. It was denied to prophets and kings in the olden time; but now that it is vouchsafed to us, let us avail ourselves of it, and constantly "let us draw near" unto God "with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

**23.** *Let us holdfast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*

As he is faithful, let us also be faithful, and hold, as with a death grip, the faith which has been revealed to us and wrought within us by the Holy Spirit; ay, and the profession of that faith too, never being ashamed to own that we are followers of the Nazarene. And let us while we are thus faithful ourselves, endeavor to strengthen others.

**24.** *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

The Greek is, to stir each other up to a paroxysm of love. There is no fear that we shall ever go too far in our love to God; though it should cast us into a state of blessed excitement, yet would it be healthy for us so to live and so to work.

**25.** *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;*

For Christian fellowship is helpful to us, and we are helpful to others by it. A Christian is not meant to be a solitary being. Sheep are gregarious, and so are the sheep of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us not be solitary pilgrims along the road to heaven, but join that glorious host of God's elect who march beneath the guidance of our great Master.

**25.** *But exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

Does not every day bring us nearer to the coming of the Lord? Are there not many signs that these are the last days? Well then, so much the more let us stir each other up to love and to good works.

**26, 27.** *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

Here the truth taught is that, if a Christian apostatizes, if he renounces his faith, and goes back to the world, it is impossible to reclaim him. A backslider may be restored, but anyone who should wilfully, after receiving the truth, reject it, has rejected the only Saviour; he has rejected the only regeneration; and, consequently, he is without the pale of the possibilities of restoration. The question is, "Will any true child of God so apostatize?" That question is answered in this very chapter; but the truth here taught is that, if he does, he goes into a state of absolute hopelessness.

**28, 29.** *He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment,-*

Can there be any sorer punishment than to die without mercy? Yes, there is, for there is eternal punishment: "of how much sorer punishment," —

**29-31.** *Suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the*

*covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

With what terrible sentences does Paul hedge up the way of the believer! Leave that way, and there is nothing for you but destruction. Reject your Saviour, give up your hope in him, and there cannot be another name by which you can be saved, or another glorified by which you can be cleansed from sin.

**32, 33.** *But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions;-*

Made a spectacle to be mocked at in the theater of the world; —

**33-35.** *And partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.*

You must push on; you have already defied the foe, to turn back is certain destruction, for you have no armor for your back.

**36.** *For ye have need of patience,-*

Or, endurance, —

**36.** *That, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*

To hold on, to continue to do God's will,-this is the task. To start, and to make a spurt now and then, is easy enough; but to keep on, is trying to every spiritual muscle; and only God can enable you to do so.

**37, 38.** *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

If there be a drawing back from faith, God can have no pleasure in us; but shall we draw back? That is the question, and here is the answer: —

**39.** *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition;-*

We who have believed in Jesus, we who have sincerely committed ourselves to his care, we who have been born again of the Holy Spirit, we in whom there is the real work of grace which God has pledged to carry on, — “we are not of them who draw back unto perdition:” —

**39.** *But of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

What a blessed truth is this! O Christian, as you see the danger that lies before you if you did prove to be an apostate, bless that sovereign grace which will not suffer you so to do, even as Paul wrote to the Philippians, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 9:24-28; AND 10.

### **HEBREWS 10:1-18**

**1.** *For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.*

A man could go to the Levitical sacrifices twenty years running, and yet be no forwarder. He must go again and again as long as he lived. They were only figures and shadows and types; the real sacrifice is Christ.

**2.** *For then-*

If they had been effectual,

**2.** *Would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*

Once forgiven, the sin would not have come back again. If the sacrifice had really cleansed the conscience of the offerer, he would not have had cause to present it again.

**3-5.** *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

Wherefore when he cometh- he who is the essence of it all, “When he cometh,”

**5-7.** *Into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and*

*sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.*

Types were no longer needed when the great Antitype had come. Christ was no longer pre-figured, for he was there in person. He put away the old shadows of the blood of bulls and goats when he brought his own real sacrifice, the true atonement for sin.

**8, 9.** *Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.*

The old law is gone, the first sacrifice is no longer presented, for the second is come, the real offering of Christ the Lamb of God.

**10.** *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

Once, and only once. How Paul loves to recall this fact!

**11, 12.** *And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man,*

Note these glorious words, "This Man,"-

**12, 13.** *After he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.*

He would not have sat down if his work had not been done. He would not have ceased from his priestly service of presenting sacrifice if his one offering had not been sufficient. This Man's offering once, once, once, has done all that God demanded, and all that man required.

**14.** *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

This glorious message is for you, beloved, if you believe in Christ. By his one sacrifice he has done all that you need; he has perfected you for ever.

**15-17.** *Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I wilt make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts,*

*and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

Treasure up these golden words: “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

**18.** *Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*

The offering for sin is in order that sin may be put away; and if it be put away, so that God himself will remember it no more, what more is wanted? What more could be desired? Wherefore, let us rest in the one great finished work of Christ, and be perfectly happy. Sin is gone, wrath is over, for those for whom Christ died; they are perfected for ever through his one great sacrifice.

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 9:24-28; AND 10:1-18.

## **HEBREWS 10:1-22**

**1.** *For the law —*

The old ceremonial law of Moses, —

**1.** *Having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.*

Those that were sprinkled with the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices did not feel that their sin was for ever put away. They went back, after the victim had been offered, with a certain measure of rest and relief, but not with that perfect rest which is the accompaniment of the pardon that Jesus gives to those who come unto God through him.

**2.** *For —*

If the worshippers had thus been made perfect; if they had been completely cleansed and accepted through these sacrifices, —

**2.** *Then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*

The fact that there was a lamb to be offered every morning and every evening, and that there was a great day of atonement to be observed every year, proved that there was sin still remaining, which had not been put away, sin that the worshippers needed to come again, and again, and yet again, with fresh sacrifices for their fresh sins. The apostle’s argument is unanswerable.

**3, 4.** *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

Your common sense tells you “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” Although rivers of such blood should continually be flowing, what efficacy could there be in them to put away the moral stain of guilt and transgression against God?

**5.** *Wherefore when he cometh into the world, —*

That great HE, — that Divine HE, — our Saviour and our God. “when he cometh into the world,”-

**5-7.** *He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.*

That will had not been done, although myriads of sacrifices had been offered. But Christ came really to do that will by offering himself as the one and only acceptable sacrifice.

**8, 9.** *Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.*

An end was made of the types and shadows of the ceremonial law, that the real substance might be introduced by Christ. Never imagine, dear friends, that the old Jewish ceremonial law is to drag on its existence, and to be intermingled with the Christian dispensation. Ah, no! As the shadows of the night vanish when the sun arises, as the lamps in yonder street are put out when daylight returns, so was it with all the types and shadows of the ancient law when the great Antitype appeared.

**10.** *By the which will —*

That is, the will of God as done by Christ: “By the which will “

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**10-12.** *We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away*

*sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; —*

Oh, what a blessed doctrine this is, — that the one offering of Christ has done what the tens of thousands of offerings under the old law never could accomplish! All the work of man is but the spinning of a righteousness which is undone as quickly as it is spun; but Christ has finished the seamless and spotless robe of his righteousness which is to last for ever. By his one sacrifice he has ended all the fruitless labour of the ages; and, now, as many of us as have believed in him have all the benefits of his perfect work. Having completed his great task, he “sat down on the right hand of God;” —

**13.** *From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.*

“Expecting.” That was the subject of this morning’s sermon. We are expecting something better than we have yet seen. “We were saved in hope,” We are expecting that which is yet to be revealed; and our covenant Head is expecting, too. This is the age of expectancy. We have not yet come to the fullness of the blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus. The mercy of God is at present; only in the bud; the fully-developed flower has yet to be seen. Christ is expecting; his saints are expecting; the whole creation is expecting.

**14-17.** *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

Oh, what a blessed covenant this is! Christ’s death has established a covenant of grace in which there is no flaw, and no possibility of failure, for the one Condition of the covenant has been fulfilled by Christ, and now it stands as a covenant of “shalls” and “wills” on God’s part from which he will never run back. It is not, “If they do this, and if they do that, I will do the other;” but it is all “I will.” “I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

**18.** *Now Where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*

No more offering for sin is needed, for the work of atonement is fully done, and done for ever. As the sin of all who believe in Jesus is put away, what heed is there of any further sacrifice on account of it? The atonement is complete; let us therefore rejoice in it, and praise God for it.

**19-22.** *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

### **HEBREWS 10:1-25**

**1.** *For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.*

This refers to the old ceremonial law, under which the Jews lived so long. They always had to go on, year after year, offering the same kind of sacrifices, because the work of atonement was never done perfectly; men were not cleansed or saved by it, so the process had to be constantly repeated.

**2.** *For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*

There would have been no need to bring another lamb to be offered if the one which was presented had put away sin; there would have been no need of another day of atonement if the sacrifice on the one day had really made atonement for sin.

**3, 4.** *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

Their blood was only a picture, an emblem, a type of far more precious blood, — the shadow of the real atonement which was afterwards to be offered.

**5.** *Wherefore when he cometh into the world, —*

That is, the true Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, our Redeemer: “When he cometh into the world,” —

**5.** *He saith, —*

According to Psalm 40:6-8, —

**5-9.** *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.*

He takes away the type because the great Antitype has come. He abolishes the offering of bullocks, and goats, and lambs, because HE has come whom they all foreshadowed.

**10.** *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

Or, “once.” It can never be offered again. The presence of offering up the body and the blood of Christ in the mass is sheer profanity. It has been done once, and there is no need of a repetition. To suppose that it could be repeated, is to imply that it was incomplete on the first occasion; but it was not, for by it we are already sanctified.

**11, 12.** *And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

It was done, wholly done, and done for ever; nothing was to be added to it, and, therefore, Jesus “sat down” in the place of honour and power “on the right hand of God”; —

**13, 14.** *From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

Or, “set apart.” He has fully saved all those for whom he died. His one sacrifice was so effectual that, by it, he has for ever put away the sin of the whole multitude of those that believe in him.

**15.** *Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us:*

And what more veritable witness can we have? That to which the Holy Ghost bears testimony must never be questioned by us.

**15-17.** *For after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

What a wonderful covenant that is; — not that he will bless you if you keep the law, but that you shall be enabled to keep it, and that he will lead you to do so by putting his law, not on tables of stone, where your eye can see it, but on the fleshy tablets of your heart, where your soul shall feel its force and power, so that you shall be obedient to it. Meditate on those glorious words: “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

**18.** *Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*

If the sins themselves have gone, and God will remember them no more, no further sacrifice is required for them. What need have ye of cleansing if ye are so clean that God himself sees no sin in you? O glorious purgation by the atoning sacrifice of Christ! Rejoice in it, and praise the Lord for it for ever and ever.

**19-25.** *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

Notice the practical teaching of this great truth. If you have been thus washed, do not defile yourselves again. If, by God’s rich mercy, you have been delivered from the transgressions of the past, let gratitude move you to holy living, and endeavor, not only to grow in grace yourselves, but to help others in the same direction, that so the abounding mercy of God may have from us abundant praise. God grant it for his name’s sake! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 9:18-28; AND 10:1-25.

## **HEBREWS 10:19-39**

**19-22.** *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

The place of the Christian is that of the nearest conceivable access to God for “the holiest” is “the holy of holies,”-that innermost part of the tabernacle to reach which the high priest had to pass through the outer court, and through the court of the priests, and then through the beautiful veil which concealed the mercy-seat. At the death of Christ, that veil was rent from the top to the bottom, so now there is nothing to keep us back from the mercy-seat. We, therefore, have boldness and liberty in that way “to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus;” where the high priest himself could only go once in the year, we may go at all times. The veil has not been merely lifted up for a while, and then dropped down again; it is not rolled up ready for future use; it is rent in twain, destroyed. Since Jesus has died, there is no separation now between the believer and his God except by means of such a veil as our base unbelief may please to hang up. The crimson way of Christ’s shed blood lies open to all believers therefore, “let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water,”

**23.** *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;*

Not only hold it, but hold it fast without wavering. Let us never have a question about it. God grant that we may have an unquestioning, unstaggering faith! To hold fast the profession of our faith, seems enough; but to hold it fast without wavering, is better still; and so we ought to do.

**23.** *(For he is faithful that promised;)*

God gives us no cause for wavering, for he never wavers. If he were an unfaithful God, we might naturally be an unbelieving people; but “he is faithful that promised.” Therefore, “let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.”

**24.** *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

I am afraid there are some who consider one another to provoke in quite a different spirit from this,-who watch to find out a tender spot where a wound will be most felt. They observe the weakness of a brother's constitution, and then play upon it, or make jests about it. All this is evil, so let us avoid it; let us all seek out the good points of our brethren, and consider them, that we may afterwards be the means of guiding them to those peculiar good works for which they are best adapted. "Provoke unto love and to good works." I do not know how we can do that better than by being very loving and very full of good works ourselves, for then will others be likely to say, "If these people are helped by God's grace to love like this, and to labour like this, why should not we do the same" A good example is often better than a very proper precept.

**25.** *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;-*

Yes; there are some who even make a bad use of what ought to be a great blessing, namely, the printing-press, and the printed sermon, by staying at home to read a sermon because, they say, it is better than going out to hear one. Well, dear friend, if I could not hear profitably, I would still make one of the assembly gathered together for the worship of God. It is a bad example for a professing Christian to absent himself from the assembly of the friends of Christ. There was a dear sister, whom many of you knew, who used to attend here with great regularity, although she could not hear a word that was said; but she said it did her good to join in the hymns, and to know that she was worshipping God with the rest of his people. I wish that some, who stay away for the most frivolous excuses, would think of this verse: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;"-

**25.** *But exhorting one another and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

It is not the work of the minister alone to exhort, but the brethren, and the sisters, too, should exhort one another, and seek to stir each other up in the faith and fear of God.

**26, 27.** *For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*

*but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

This is a solemn text, containing a very terrible truth. If, after having been regenerated, and made children of God, we were willfully and deliberately to let the Saviour go, and apostatize altogether to the world, there would be no hope for us. What, then, is our hope? Why, that we shall never be permitted to do so,-that the grace of God will keep us so that, although we may fall like Peter, we shall not fall away like Judas,-that, though we may sin, there shall not be that degree of studied willfulness about it that would make it to be the sin unto death, a deliberate act of spiritual suicide. The doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints derives great glory from this other truth that, if they did not persevere, there is no second means of grace, no other plan of salvation. No man was ever born again twice; no man was ever washed twice in the precious blood of Jesus. The one washing makes us so clean that "he that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet," for which Jesus provides by daily cleansing; but the one grand atoning act never fails. If it did fail, there would remain "no more sacrifice for sins.

**28, 29.** *He that despised Moses law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace*

For apostasy from Christ would amount to all this; and if that were possible, what grace would remain?

**30.** *For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.*

O professors, take this message home to your hearts! Let every one of us take it home: "The Lord shall judge his people." God's fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem. If a man tries nothing else, he will test his gold; and if no others shall be judged, yet certainly those will be who say that they are the Lord's people. In that dread day, he will separate the goats from the sheep, the tares from the wheat, and the dross from the gold; his fan will be in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor; he will sit as a refiner of

silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi; he shall be like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. Woe to those, in that day, who are a defilement to his Church, and an adulteration to the purity of his people!

**31.** *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

What a terrible verse is that! It is a text that ought to be preached from by those who are always saying that the punishment of the wicked will be less than, according to our minds, the Word of God leads us to expect it to be:

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

**32.** *But call to remembrance the former days,-*

The apostle is not expecting that any of them will ever go back to where they were before; he is persuaded that they will persevere even to the end. The very warning that he gives is a powerful preventive against apostasy. Now comes the exhortation: “Call to remembrance the former days.” Some of you can “call to remembrance” the time when you joined the church, when you had to run the gauntlet for Christ's sake. Then, in your early Christian life, you feared nothing and nobody so long as you could glorify God. Then, you had great enjoyment, sweet seasons of communion with your Lord: “Call to remembrance the former days.”

**32, 33.** *In which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.*

In your early Christian days, you were pointed at, and regarded as quite singular for being servants of Christ; or, possibly, it was not yourselves so much as your pastors, your leaders, your friends who were prominent in the church, at whom the arrows of the adversaries were aimed. They shot at you through them; and, sometimes, that pained you much more than when they distinctly attacked you. Altogether, it was “a great fight of afflictions” that you had to endure.

**34.** *For ye had compassion of me in my bonds,*

In those early days, the Jewish believers clung as the unbelieving Jews persecuted him, to Paul just as ardently

**34, 35.** *And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.*

Be like the brave Spartan who would never lose his shield, but would come home either with it or on it. "Cast not away your confidence." You trusted in God in those early days, and nothing seemed to daunt you then. "Cast not away your confidence." Rather, get more to add to it. Let there be no thought of going back, but may there rather be a distinct advance!

**36.** *For ye have need of patience,-*

Our supply of that virtue is often very short; it is an article of which there is very little in the market, and all of us have need of more of it: "Ye have need of patience,"-

**36.** *That, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*

There must first be the doing of the will of God, and then the reward will come afterwards. God will not give to his people their full reward yet. Patience, then, brother; patience, sister. Saturday night will come one of these days; your week's work will then be over, and you will be more than repaid for anything you have done for your Lord.

**37, 38.** *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

The drawers back-the mere professors-those who say they have been illuminated, and who have tasted, in a measure, the sweetness of religion, yet who never received Christ in their inmost heart,-these are the people in whom God hath no pleasure.

**39.** *But we-What a consoling end this is to the chapter!*

It ought to comfort every believer in Christ who has been distressed by the earlier verses: "we"-

**39.** *Are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

May that be true of every one of us, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

## HEBREWS 11

This is a very familiar chapter, but it is none the less precious. It is the roll of the heroes of faith. Here you have a list of the men who believed in God, and who therefore did great things.

**1, 2.** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

“The elders”— that is, those who lived in the ancient times — wrought wondrous works by faith, and the “report” of them still encourages others to try to do likewise.

**3.** *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

That is one of the earliest lessons of faith. We do not discover the secrets of Creation by mere reason, or the teachings of science; it is only by revelation that the marvellous story can reach us. Faith accepts the inspired declaration that God made all things, and that the things that are seen were made out of things that are not seen, so that, after all, the foundation of everything is that which is not seen. The visible is but a dream; the things which are round about us are the transient things that shall all pass away. The things that are not seen are eternal, and shall abide for ever. The things which are seen were made out of the invisible, not out of things which are seen.

**4.** *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

Paul begins his list of heroes of faith with Abel; and you will notice that faith works differently in each one of these mighty men. It is the same living principle in all of them; but they are different men, and their faith is seen in very different circumstances. Faith is able to work in all manner of ways; it is good at everything. There is nothing that God calls us to do but faith can enable us to accomplish it. In Abel’s case, we see that faith is grand at worshipping. Faith brings a right sacrifice; brings it in the right way; and speaks even after she is dead, for the blood of Abel cried out of the ground. Oh, that all of us might so live that, even out of our graves, there might come a voice speaking for God!

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

See, here, how faith has learnt the secret art of pleasing God. God is the thrice-holy One; he is a jealous God, and a very little sin greatly provokes him; but faith knows how to please him. I do not wonder that Enoch did not die; it was a less thing to be translated to heaven than it was to please God. To live for three hundred years, in constant communion with God, as he did, to be ever pleasing God, was a mighty triumph for faith. Nay God grant that, during all the years that we live, whether they are few or many, we may so live as always to please him! “But without faith it is impossible to please him.”

**7.** *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

Fear and faith may sometimes dwell together. There is a holy, humble fear that perfect love never casts out, but entertains and cherishes; and this is the kind of fear that Noah possessed: “Being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, he prepared an ark.” Noah was a practical life-saver,— an ark-builder; and so he became the second father of the human race,— a sort of new Adam,— and that simply by his faith. Oh! what is there that is impossible to the man who believes in God? “All things are possible to him that believeth.”

**8.** *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

He was self-exiled from his home,— a wanderer upon the face of the earth. Yet, when called of God, it mattered not to him where he was bidden to go; he seemed to say, “Appoint my way, great God. It is for me not to ask the reason why, but to obey thy command.”

**9-11.** *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*

So that faith made the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother; faith has caused our spiritual barrenness to bring forth abundantly. Oh, that some barren soul here might catch the blessed influences of faith, and begin at once to bear fruit for God!

**12.** *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*

“Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead.” That “one” was Isaac, for he was given up to die; and, apparently, nothing could save him from death. Yet God did save him, and from him there sprang “so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.”

**13.** *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

“These all”— Paul means Abraham, and Sarah, and Isaac, and Jacob,— died in faith.” They “embraced” the promises,— threw their arms round them,— hugged them to their hearts,— embraced them as those who dearly loved them.

**14, 15.** *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.*

If they were seeking a country, might they not have gone back to their own country, from whence they came out? No; true believers know nothing about going back. We are bound to go forward to the better land that is before us. Almighty grace will not permit the people of God to turn aside, and find their rest anywhere else. We are bound for the kingdom; and, by the grace of God, we shall not rest until we enter it, to go no more out for ever.

**16-19.** *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise Him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

See how faith consecrates natural affection. See also how faith laughs at impossibilities. Abraham expects that God will raise his son from the dead, or do something equally wonderful, so that the promise he had given shall be fulfilled. It was not Abraham's business to keep God's promise for him; it was God's business to do that for himself, and he did it. You remember how Rebekah tried to make God's promise come true for Jacob, and what a mess she made by her plotting and scheming. When we give our attention to keeping God's precepts, and leave him to fulfill his own promises, all will be well. It was Abraham's part to offer up his son; it was God's part to fulfill the promise to his seed according to the covenant which he had made.

**20.** *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

Looking into the future, although he was blind. Poor old man; lying upon his bed, with his eyes so dim that he could not tell one of his sons from another, he could yet look into the future, and bless his sons "concerning things to come." Oh, what sharp eyes faith has, even when the eyes of bodily vision have become dim! We may see far more by faith than we can by sight.

**21.** *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

Ah, that staff of his! — you know why he used it. I believe he loved it, because it made him remember the brook Jabbok where "he halted upon his thigh." It had long been his companion, for he said, "With my staff I passed over this Jordan;" but it became more than ever necessary to him after he had won that victory, and had also learned his own weakness. And now, as if in memory of the God who had blessed him, he leans upon the top of his staff, and blesses the sons of Joseph. Now the chapter goes on with a long list of those who, by faith, wrought wonders.

**22-31.** *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.*

What! Has the unchaste Rahab got in here with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph,— the chaste Joseph? Yes. “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.” She hid them in her house, although that action would have cost her life if they had been discovered; and though there was some deception mixed with her faith, which we need not dwell upon now, yet God the Holy Spirit records her faith, and hides her fault.

**32-39.** *And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were*

*tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

They did not live to see Christ come. They expected him; but, before the time when Paul was writing,— before the actual coming of Christ, they had all passed away: “These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:”

**40.** *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

Is it not wonderful that we, who bring up the rear of the army of faith, are necessary to its completeness? It cannot be perfect without us. Ay, heaven itself will not be complete without us who are on the road to it. There would be empty seats in the holy orchestra, gaps in the sacred circle; so we who believe must all come there to make them perfect. God help us to hasten on our road, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

## **HEBREWS 11**

These men, of whom we are now briefly to read, are a company of God’s witnesses; and the apostle calls them, in the next chapter, “a cloud of witnesses,” who, from their lofty seats above, are watching us who are now running the Christian race.

**1, 2.** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

Those of the olden time, who were men of noble character, won that character by their faith.

**3.** *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

Things that we see were not made out of things that we see. They were brought out of the unseen by the word of God; so that, really, the word of God is the foundation of everything that has been formed by him; and, after all, things material—created and seen—are not truly substantial. They are but shadows; the real substance is that which never can be seen, even the ever-blessed God, whose voice—whose word—created the heavens and the earth.

**4.** *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

All down the ages, the faith of Abel has continued bearing witness to God. Oh, that we might have Abel's faith, and offer to God the Lamb,—even Christ Jesus,—that we also may be accepted for his sake!

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

Mark that this holiest of men, whose walk with God was so close and unbroken that he was permitted to escape the pangs of death, nevertheless did not attain to this high position by his own works, but by faith.

**7.** *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

See how faith within a man masters all his emotions. Noah, in preparing the ark, was “moved with fear;” but that fear, instead of hampering him, was yoked with his faith, and so was turned to practical account. Oh, for an overcoming faith, which shall hold our entire nature in check, or which shall employ every part of our being for its own high and noble purposes!

**8.** *By faith Abraham,—*

To whom Paul devotes a long passage, because he is the father of the faithful, the greatest exponent of faith that we have ever met with: “By faith Abraham,”—

**8, 9.** *When he was called to go out into a place which he should afar receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles—*

That is, in tents—

**9, 10.** *With Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

And he was content to be a pilgrim and wanderer till he should reach that city; he was quite willing to dispense with all present comfort for the sake of that glorious future which God set before the eyes of his faith.

**11-13.** *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

What a sweet word that is, “embraced them”! First, they were sure the promises were true; they “were persuaded of them.” But, next, they laid hold of them, pressed them to their hearts, they “embraced them.” And then, further, they practically showed the fruit of their faith by confessing that “they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

**14-15.** *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.*

But, now, faith has no thought of going back; her face is set like a flint to go towards the heavenly city, forsaking every earthly joy for the sake of the eternal future.

**16.** *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

For they are not ashamed to look forward to the future for their chief joy; and God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared that chief joy for them.

**17-19.** *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,*

*of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

See how Abraham spied out the great doctrine of the resurrection. Though almost driven to desperation, he would not give up his faith in God. He was bidden to believe two apparently opposite things;—first, that in Isaac should his seed be called; and, secondly, that he must offer up Isaac;—but he bridged the two by believing another grand truth, that God was able to raise up Isaac, “even from the dead.” Whenever there are two things, revealed to you in Scripture, which you cannot quite reconcile, you may always believe that, between them, there lies something more glorious still, which your dim eyes as yet are scarcely able to perceive.

**20.** *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

It was blundering faith, for Jacob deceived his father, and Isaac himself made mistakes in giving his blessing; yet even his mistakes were all right in God’s sight. It was by faith that he blessed both his sons, and therefore I gather that a faith which blunders, if it be faith in God, is an acceptable faith.

**21.** *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

Grasping that memorable staff with which he “passed over this Jordan,”—that staff on which he leaned so heavily when the wrestling angel made him go limping over Penuel,—that staff which was a memorial of the breaking down which he had suffered when he gained the name of Israel by prevailing with his God,—on that staff he leaned as he “blessed both the sons of Joseph.”

**22.** *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.*

A sure proof that he believed they would come out of Egypt, for he would not be buried among the Pharaohs, though a prominent place would have been assigned to him there; but he would have his bones lie with those of his ancestors, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

**23-33.** *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness,—*

Which is quite as great a thing as subduing kingdoms.

**33.** *Obtained promises,-*

Which, by being put in this connection, seems to be as blessed a thing as working righteousness.

**33-35.** *Stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured,—*

Is this also a feat of faith? Yes; instead of showing their faith by putting their enemies to flight, they prove it by enduring all manner of tortures without shrinking.

**35-39.** *Not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:)*

*they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

Christ did not come in their day; the hour for the fulfillment of the great promise had not then struck.

**40.** *God having provided some better thing for us, that they—*  
Even they, great as they are,—

**40.** *Without us should not be made perfect.*

There is a something for us, whose lot is cast in these latter days, to bring, which shall complete the circle and choir of the Church of Christ, for they without us could not be made perfect. The Lord grant us grace to be ready for our share in that glorious consummation, for Christ's sake. Amen.

## **HEBREWS 11**

In this chapter we read of the wonders of faith; but I have never read a chapter setting forth the wonders of unbelief. Unbelief is barren impotent, a mere negation, a dead and accursed thing; but faith bears fruit, faith produces good works, faith achieves marvels.

**1.** *Now faith —*

That is, belief, trust in God,-

**1.** *If the substance of things hoped for,*

It gets a grip of them, and holds them fast

**1.** *The evidence of things not seen,*

The height of what we cannot see with our mortal eyes,

**2.** *For by it the elders obtained a good report,*

Those who lived in the olden time gained fame and glory from God himself by faith.

**3.** *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

By faith, we know more about the creation of the world than philosophy can ever teach us, It has invented the most remarkable and ridiculous theories of how the worlds were made and men produced. We have the truth here; the worlds were framed by the word of God, not made of things which existed previously, but spoken out of nothing by the voice of the Almighty.

**4.** *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

Faith teaches us how to worship God aright. Faith brings the appointed sacrifice, which is therefore accepted.

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

The way to please God, then, is to believe in him, and if there be any possibility of entering heaven without seeing death, faith alone can point the way. You cannot be Enochs unless you please God, and you cannot please God unless you have faith in him.

**7.** *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

Noah was the second great father of men as Adam was the first. In the flood, all died except Noah and his family. Faith made him build the great ship on dry land, into which he went, with his wife and family and all manner of living creatures; and when the rest of mankind were destroyed, they outlived the flood.

**8-18.** *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which, he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers*

*and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for he hath prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:*

The great trouble of Abraham was not his fatherly instinct, hard as it was to overcome that, and to be the slayer of his only son, his great difficulty was? “ How can God’s promise be kept ? He has given me promise that in Isaac shall my seed be called, yet he tells me to offer up my son, how can this be? But by faith he did it,—

**19.** *Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

The doctrine of the resurrection is a precious jewel that Faith weareth as in a ring on her right hand. “God can raise the dead,” says Faith, and that is a most comforting truth. O you bereaved ones, wear that ring! O you who fear to die, wear that priceless jewel ! It will be better than any amulet or talisman that the ancients ever wore.

**20, 21.** *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

Faith can bless other people as well as the believer himself. It not only brings good cheer into a man’s own heart, but it enables him to speak words of love and consolation to his children. Dying Jacob pronounces living blessings upon his sons, and upon their sons generation after generation.

**22.** *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.*

He would not have his bones buried away from those of his godly ancestors, for he never forgot that he belonged to the chosen nation.

**23.** *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the King's commandment.:*

They were not afraid to brave the consequences of disobeying Pharaoh's command because of their faith.

**24-26.** *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than, to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*

Nothing but faith could have brought him to that decision.

**27-29.** *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*

For faith can do what unbelief must not attempt to do, and when unbelief tries to follow in the footsteps of faith, it becomes its own destroyer. You must have real faith in God, or you cannot go where faith would take you; but with faith you may go through the cloud or through the sea, and find yourself safe on the other side.

**30.** *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.*

You could not see faith at work on those solid walls. Those huge ramparts and battlements seemed to stand fast and firm, yet they "fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." No battering rams played upon them, but faith can do better work than battering rams or dynamite.

**31-33.** *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,*

Remember Daniel in the lions' den, and then ask yourself, "What is there that faith cannot do?"

**34.** *Quenched the violence of fire,*

Think of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and remember how the fierceness of Nebuchadnezzar's fire was quenched for them.

**34-35.** *Escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women—*

For faith works equal wonders in women as in men: "Women"—

**35-38.** *Received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

This is the grandest roll of heroes that ever lived, and every one among them was a man or woman of faith. Faith made them so mighty. They were not greater, and in some respects not better than the rest of us, but they believed in God, they were firm in faith, and this became the basis of their conquering character, and thus their names are imperishably recorded here. They did not win the Victoria cross, but they bore the cross for their Lord, and he has honoured them with an everlasting crown, which shall never be taken from them.

**39.** *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

They passed away before Christ's day, so they did not see the fulfillment of the promises concerning his coming.

**40.** *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

They are waiting up yonder for us; the choirs of heaven cannot be completed without you -and me. Heaven's full complement, the

perfect number of the divine family of love, can never be made up till we who have believed go up yonder to join all those who have had like precious faith. By God's grace, we shall all be there that they with us may be made perfect.

## **HEBREWS 11**

First, a definition of faith.

*1-3. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

There was no pre-existent matter, the world was made by God's word, so that prior to the things which are seen, there existed that which is not seen. We, dear friends, when we are trusting in the unseen God, are going back to first principles, we are getting to that which is the essence and the source of all. The next verse illustrates the worship of faith.

*4. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

There is no worshipping God aright, except by faith. The most gorgeous ceremonies are as nothing in his sight; it is the faith of the heart which he accepts. Next we read of the reward of faith.

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

See this reward then; it pleases God, and that is reward enough far anyone of us. Next see faith's safety.

*7. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

Faith can outlive a deluge which drowns the whole world. She hath an Ark even when God's wrath sweeps all the rest away. Next we learn the obedience of faith.

**8-10.** *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed: and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

Here you have the expectation of faith. Faith does not live on things seen; she lives on something yet to come. That which is to come she regards as eternal, not like a mere tent in which she dwells here, but a city that hath foundations, fixed and firm. Next we see the strength of faith, that strength seen in the deadness of nature.

**11-13.** *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

That is a rich word, they "embraced them." They were far off, and yet faith brought them so near that they seemed to receive them to their hearts and feel the comfort of them. Here is the confession of faith.

**14-19.** *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

Here you have the triumph of faith, one of the greatest victories that was ever achieved by faith, when a man was willing, at God's command, to offer up his son, his only son, his son according to promise, his son in whom all the covenant was to be fulfilled. In the 20<sup>th</sup> verse you get the discernment of faith, faith foreseeing: —

**20, 21.** *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

You remember 'his discernment, how he crossed his hands willingly that he might lay the right hand upon the younger son. Faith is always giving blessings to others, and she knows which way to give them, for God maketh her wondrously quick of heart and quick of eye.

**22, 23.** *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel: and gave commandment concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.*

Here is the courage of faith: —

**24, 25.** *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son. of Pharaoh's daughter: Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season:*

Here is the choice of faith: —

**26.** *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward*

Here is the judgment of faith, by which she judges wisely, choosing rather to be reproached for Christ than to reign with the world.

**27, 28.** *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.*

Here, again, you have the obedience of faith, taking God's precepts and carrying them out.

**29.** *By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*

There you have the difference between faith and presumption: faith goes through the sea, presumption is drowned in the sea.

**30.** *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.*

Here are the weapons of faith, the warfare of faith, with nothing but her ram's horn trumpet she encompasses the giant walls of the city, and down they fall.

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

Here you have faith uniting itself with the people of God: she perished not with them that believed not, for she had come out from among them and allied herself with the people of God by receiving the spies.

**32-35.** *And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae: of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance: that they might obtain a better resurrection:*

O the victories of faith.! When faith takes to working, how mightily she works.

**36, 37.** *And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented:*

You have seen the works of faith and the sufferings of faith; now you see God's estimate of faith. He counts the believing man to be far beyond the rest of mankind.

**38, 39.** *(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And*

*these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

It lay in the future to them far more than it does to us, for Christ has now come, and we look back to that glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour, but they had altogether to look forward.

**40.** *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

For it never was God's intention that any part of his church should be able to do without the rest of it, so that those who lived before the time of Christ cannot do without us; neither can we do without them.

### **HEBREWS 11:1-13**

**1, 2.** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elder obtained a good report.*

So it was written, in the olden time, that believers "obtained a good report;" and this second verse shows that they obtained it by their faith. The best part of the report about them is, that they believed their God, and believed all that was revealed to them by his Word and his Spirit.

**3.** *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

The facts about creation must be the subject of faith. It is true that they can be substantiated, by the argument from design, and in other ways; still, for a wise purpose as I believe, God has not made even that matter of the creation of the universe perfectly clear to human reason, so there is room for the exercise of faith. Men like to have everything laid down according to the rules of mathematical precision, but God desires them to exercise faith; and, therefore, he has not acted according to their wishes.

**4.** *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

The first of the long line of martyrs triumphed by faith; and if you are to be strong to bear witness for God, you must be made strong by the same power which wrought so effectually in Abel. If,

like his, your life is to be a speaking life, — a life which shall speak even out of the grave, — its voice must be the voice of faith.

**5.** *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

It is faith that muzzles the mouth of death, and takes away the power of the sepulcher. If any man, who had not been a believer, had been translated as Enoch was, we should have been able to point to a great feat accomplished apart from faith. It has never been so; for this, which was one of the greatest things that was ever done, — to leap from this life into another, and to overleap the grave altogether, — was only achieved “by faith.”

**6, 7.** *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet,*

These are the things with which faith always deals; — not with the things that are seen or are apprehensible by the senses or the feelings.

**7.** *Moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

So you see that faith has a condemning power towards an ungodly world. You do not need to be constantly telling worldlings that they are doing wrong; let them see clearly the evidence of your faith, for that will bear the strongest conceivable witness against their unbelief and sin, even as Noah, by his faith, “condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

**8.** *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

That is, surely, the very masterpiece of faith. God bade Abraham go forth from his native land, he believed that God knew where he was to go though he did not himself know; so he left the direction of his wanderings entirely in the Lord’s hands, and obeyed, and “went out, not knowing whither he went.” We are not to ask for full

knowledge before we will be obedient to the will of the Lord; but we are to obey God in the dark, even as Abraham did.

*9. By faith he adjourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:*

It is one of the great evidences of true faith for her to keep on, to continue, to abide, without any visible signs or tokens of what she knows is hers. The life of faith is wonderful, but so also is the walk of faith. Her walk has much about it that is mysterious; she knows that the land she treads on belongs to her; and yet, in another sense, she cannot claim a solitary foot of it. She knows that she is at home, even as Abraham was in his own land; yet like him, she knows herself to be a sojourner in a strange land, and is quite content to be so.

*10. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

What a depth of meaning there is in those five words, “a city which hath foundation,” — as if all other cities had none! They come, and they go, as if they were molehills raised on the surface of the earth, or little mounds of sand made by the children’s wooden spades upon the seashore, which the next tide will wash away. What vast numbers of cities have been destroyed already! We are constantly picking up the relics of them, but there is, blessed be the name of the Lord, “a city which hath foundations,” a city founded on eternal power, and we are on our way to that city, I hope.

*11, 12. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*

Perhaps the reference is to Abraham, who was as good as dead, being so old; or to Isaac, who was as good as dead, for he was laid upon the altar, and was practically “offered up” as a sacrifice unto the Lord. There were many deaths to work against the life of faith; yet life triumphed over death after all.

*13. These all died in faith,*

That is the epitaph which God has carved over the resting-place of his faithful ones: "These all died in faith." Will this be the record concerning all of us, "These all died in faith"?

**13.** *Not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

The chapter is a very long one so I must condense it, as the apostle himself did when he came to the 32<sup>nd</sup> verse; there was so much to be said that he added, —

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 11:1-13; AND 32 - 40.

### **HEBREWS 11:1-21**

This is the Arc de Triomphe erected to the memory of the heroes of faith, whose names are here recorded by the apostle's inspired pen, with a brief mention of some of their most memorable actions. If it had not been for their faith, which moved them to accomplish such valiant deeds, we might not have known anything about them.

**1.** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,*

Though the "things" are only "hoped for" and "not seen" at present, the eye of faith can see them, and the hand of faith can grasp them. Faith is more mighty than any of our senses, or than all our senses combined.

**2.** *For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

It is noteworthy that they obtained this "good report" by their faith. Doubt gives a man an evil reputation; it is only believers who obtain such a "report" as even the Holy Spirit describes as "good."

**3.** *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

It is only by believing the inspired record that we can obtain a true understanding of the wondrous work of creation. Science and reason are of little or no avail here, but the opening words of divine revelation explain the great mystery: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

**4.** *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

It was the sacrifice of the believing Abel that was well pleasing in God's sight; and though his brother Cain, out of jealousy and malice, slew him, his good reputation continues even to this day. That is the best way of living which enables a man to go on speaking for God even after he is dead.

**5.** *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

It was by faith, not by works, that this truly gracious man, "was translated that he should not see death." We never read of any unbeliever "that he pleased God," but this is the inspired testimony concerning Enoch.

**6.** *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

No one can come to God if he does not believe that there is a God, and that he justly dispenses rewards and punishments.

**7.** *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

There is an unholy fear which is cast out by perfect love, but there is a holy fear, a filial fear, which dwells most happily with faith, so was it with Noah, who, "by faith,... moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

**8.** *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed: and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

Though Abraham did not know where he was going, God knew, and that was quite sufficient for the patriarch. As a little child is willing to be led by his parent, so Abraham was willing to be led by God, even though that meant leaving his own country and his own people, and going to the distant land which God intended to give him.

**9, 10.** *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs*

*with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

He was only a sojourner in the land of promise, he knew that even the promised land was only a tenting-ground for him and his descendants, but he also knew that he was on his way to a divinely-planned and divinely-built city,-not like the temporary cities of earth, which shall all perish and pass away, but a city with everlasting foundations, a city that will last as long as God himself exists.

**11.** *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*

Sarah's faith was not like Abraham's, yet it was true faith, and therefore her name appears among faith's worthies.

**12, 13.** *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

Though the promises could only be seen afar off, faith has such long arms that it embraced them, clung to them as loving relatives cling to one another, and would not let them go. So may we see the promises, and be persuaded that they belong to us, and embrace them as we clasp to our bosom those who are nearest and dearest to us!

**14, 15.** *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.*

True pilgrims never think of going back; they know that, whatever difficulties and trials lie ahead of them, there are far greater ones in "that country from whence they came out." Bunyan's Christian was quite resolved not to go back to the City of Destruction whatever perils he might have to face on his way to the Celestial City.

**16.** *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

Their desire for “a better country” has been implanted within them by God himself, and “he hath prepared for them a city” which will more than satisfy their utmost desires.

**17-19.** *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

However puzzled Abraham may have been by the command to offer up the son in whom his seed was to be called, his plain duty was to obey that command, and to leave the Lord to fulfill his own promise in his own way. Perhaps he had also learned, through his mistake concerning Ishmael, that God’s way of fulfilling his promise might not be his way, and that God’s way was always best.

**20.** *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

He was old and blind, so that he did not know which of his sons came for the first blessing, yet he could see into the future sufficiently to bless both his sons “concerning things to come.” What wondrous power there is in faith even when it is exercised by very imperfect individuals!

**21.** *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

That staff had been Jacob’s companion on many memorable occasions, so it was most fitting that he should lean upon it while blessing his grandsons.

## **HEBREWS 11:1-21**

This is the triumphal arch of faith. Here we find the names of many of the heroes of faith, and a brief record of some of the battles in which they fought and conquered. May you and I possess “like precious faith” at; that of which we have here the story! We cannot enter heaven without it; we cannot fight our way through the world without it.

1. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,*

It gets a grip of what it hopes for, and holds it in its hand.

1. *The evidence of things not seen.*

We do see by faith. We see by faith what cannot be seen by our eyes; we grasp by faith what cannot be grasped with our hands. A strange mystery is the simple act of faith.

2. *For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

All the godly of the olden time had a good report of God and of holy men as the result of their faith.

3. *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

They were not evolved out of something else that existed before; evolution is a rank lie against revelation. The worlds were not made, not one of them was made, out of something pre-existent; but they were framed by the Word of God, and the things which are seen were not made of things which are seen.

4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,*

He was a better man than Cain, and his offering was a better offering than Cain's was; but at bottom here was the difference between the two brothers, Abel had faith, and Cain had none. It was "by faith" that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain presented.

4. *By which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

What wondrous faith this is! Here is a dead man speaking. Here is a man who is slain by his brother; yet the one who is killed receives the approbation of God.

5. *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death;*

Faith has conquered death itself, or else avoided it. There is scarcely anything which faith cannot do, for faith ranks itself on the side of the omnipotent God, and becomes all but omnipotent. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.

5, 6. *And was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is,*

He cannot come to a God who to his own mind is non-existent; he must believe that he is.

**6.** *And that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

You must believe that God hears prayer. You must believe that he will punish the guilty, and that he will reward the righteous. Without this sure faith, you cannot come to him.

**7.** *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house;*

You see, faith and fear can live in the same heart; and they can work together to build the same ark. Faith and fear are very sweet companions, when the fear is filial fear, a holy dread of disobeying, God. When we are moved with that fear, our faith becomes practical.

**7, 8.** *By the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed;*

He did not hesitate to leave his family, to leave his property, to leave his country; but he obeyed, “when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance.”

**8.** *And he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

Faith puts her hand into God’s hand, and follows where he leads, with sweet contentment, knowing that, if she cannot see, God can, and he will not lead us wrong. Do you not remember that hymn that our Brother Chamberlain sings so sweetly?

“So on I go — not knowing, I would not if I might;

I’d rather walk in the dark with God, than go alone in the light;

I’d rather walk by faith with him, than go alone by sight.

Where he may lead, I’ll follow, My trust in him repose:

And every hour in perfect peace I’ll sing, ‘He knows! he knows!’”

**9, 10.** *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

There have been many here in this house of prayer who have looked for this city, and they have gone to it. Others of us sit waiting here till our Lord's dear hand shall beckon us, and his voice shall say, "Come up higher." We are looking for the city. Keep looking, beloved, there is nothing here worth looking for; but look for "a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."

**11.** *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*

And this holy woman is enrolled among these saintly ones. Her faith was not all it ought to have been; but God saw that it was true faith, and he loved it, and he wrote the record of it.

**12.** *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*

This is true, literally, of Abraham's seed according to the flesh. It is also true in a spiritual sense, for he is "the father of all them that believe", and they are a multitude whom no man can number.

**13.** *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them,*

What long arms faith has! The promises are afar off, and yet faith embraces them tonight. Embrace the promises, dear friends, and stretch out your hands by faith to hands that have gone before.

"E'en now by faith we join our hands  
With those that went  
before;

And greet the blood-besprinkled bands  
On the eternal shore."

**13.** *And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

They not only were strangers and pilgrims, but they confessed it. Confessed faith is requisite. Oh, you who, like Nicodemus, come to Christ by night, be ashamed that you are ashamed, and come out, and boldly confess what you are!

**14.** *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.*

They were strangers and pilgrims here, and they sought a country elsewhere. Every man wants a country; and if we have not one beneath the stars, we seek it somewhere else.

**15.** *And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.*

Ah, but God's people are not mindful of that country from whence they came out! They have opportunity to return; but they have no wish to return. May God's grace always keep any of you from turning back; for it is to turn back unto perdition! Your faces are heavenward today; keep them so. Remember the doom of any that apostatize. It is impossible, "if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." "If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Lord, keep thy servants! Hold us up, and we shall be safe.

**16.** *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

They are not ashamed to be called God's people, and he is not ashamed to be called their God. They are looking for a city, and he has prepared a city for them. Evidently he and they are well agreed. They want a heaven, and he is preparing heaven for them, and preparing them for heaven.

**17-19.** *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

This was one of the grandest achievements of faith. It was also a figure or type of God's offering up his well-beloved Son almost on the same spot.

**20, 21.** *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

The staff which had helped him so often in his early pilgrimage, the staff on which he leaned when he came back from the place of his wrestling, halting on his thigh. He leaned on it as he sat upright

on his death-couch, and pronounced the parting blessing. So, you see, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all lived by faith, and did their works by faith, and distributed blessings to their children by faith. Friend, hast thou this faith, or hast thou not? If thou hast it, thou art blessed among men, blessed among women. If thou hast it not, what hope is there for thee either in this life or in eternity?

### **HEBREWS 11:1-26**

**1, 2.** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

The names of those who lived in old time are handed down with commendation because of their faith. If they had had no faith, we should have had no report of them.

**3.** *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

The world was not made out of the world. There was nothing to make it out of. It was created simply by the word of God, and our faith knows that. I question whether we should ever get in the matter of the creation beyond what is revealed to our faith. Reason is all very well, but faith mounts upon the shoulders of reason, and sees much farther than reason with her best telescope will ever be able to see. It is enough for us who have faith that God has told us how he made the world, and we believe it.

**4.** *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

He spoke by faith when he lived. Faith makes him speak now that he is dead. What wonders faith can work. The first saint who entered heaven entered there, it is certain, by faith. It was faith that enabled him to present an acceptable sacrifice, and it was faith that presented him to heaven. If the first who entered heaven entered there by faith, rest assured that will be true to the last; and none will enter there but those who believe.

**5.** *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

Beloved, if we cannot get a translation as Enoch did, let us not be content without getting God's good pleasure as he did. Oh! that it may be said of us that we pleased God. Then we shall, one way or another, conquer death; for if we do, we shall triumph over the grave; and if Christ shall come before we die, we shall triumph in the coming of Christ. Anyhow, faith shall be more than a match for the last enemy.

*6. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Do we not sometimes fail in this matter? We try to come to God without believing that he is. We seem to pray to nothing, or to nobody, to a spectre, to a phantom. But that prayer which is accepted is prayer to a real God, of whom we are assured that he is. Do we not also fail in our belief as to the success of prayer? We do not fully recognize that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. He that prays, believing that God will be found by him, shall not pray in vain. Tonight we may well say, "Lord, increase our faith."

*7. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear,*

For there is a fear which comes of faith — a fear which is the strength of faith's arms, by which it moves us into action. It is not slavish fear. It is a fit, and proper, and reasonable fear, such as any man must have that believes God's threatenings. "Moved with fear."

*7. Prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

Every act of faith condemns the world. Men who did not believe in God were, some of them, made to feel condemned, and others were condemned, even if they did not feel it, when they saw this holy man building a great ship upon dry land — a ship which he never would launch, but to which God would bring the sea, so that he should float over the waters deep, absolutely secure, whilst others perished. If you want to judge the wickedness of men, you need not set yourself to do it in the first place. Live a holy life, and you will judge the ungodly. I have heard it said that if there is a crooked stick, and you want to show how crooked it is, you need not waste

words in description. Place a straight one by the side of it, and the thing is done directly. Noah condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

**8.** *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

Very easy to read about that, but not so easy to do it — to tear yourself from home and friends — to go into a totally unknown country, swarming with enemies, solely on the promise that one day that country should belong to his seed. It might be hundreds of years afterwards: but God had called him, and Abraham raised no question, but away he went.

**9.** *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country,*

Not building a house there — not becoming a citizen of it, but always dwelling there in gypsy fashion.

**9.** *Dwelling in tabernacles*

That is, in tents.

**9, 10.** *With Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

He did not build a city. He did not try to do so, “for he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.”

**11.** *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*

And that was good judgment, was it not? There is no mistake about that. Whatever difficulties may lie in the way, we may always know that he is faithful who hath promised. You are not past age, my brother. God will bless you in seeking to do good. You are not past age, my sister. Have but faith in God, and then in your old age you may bring many to the Saviour’s feet. He is faithful that has promised.

**12.** *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead,*

For he was ordered to be sacrificed. There sprung from one, and him as good as dead.

**12.** *So many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*

Or if this text means Abraham, then his body was dead; and yet there sprang of him a seed “so many as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.”

**13.** *These all died in faith, not having received the promises,*

By which is meant, not that they did not receive the promises, but they did not receive the things promised.

**13, 14.** *But having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.*

They have not come to it yet; nor will they as long as they are here below. They are still seeking a country.

**15.** *And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.*

Abraham, if he wanted to settle down, might have crossed once more the river, and gone back to Ur of Chaldees. But he did not look for a city upon earth. He was evidently looking for one somewhere else. The country that he sought was not beyond the Euphrates, but beyond the narrow stream of death.

**16.** *But now they desire a better country,*

Do you feel those desires within your heart? If not, surely you have no faith, for they that have faith in the better country desire it.

**16.** *That is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

He might be ashamed to be called their God if he had unsettled them, and made them long for another city, and yet had never prepared one for them. The longings of the saints are but prophecies of the benediction of God. That which he makes us hunger for, is prepared. The bread of life shall be given us, and that country which he makes us seek, exists, and will be found of us. Wherefore keep your face that way, and let every longing and pining for the home country reassure you that this is not any dreamland, but that there is such a place.

**17-19.** *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.*

*Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

Faith does not always account. She is satisfied with God's word. But when she does account, then she is great at accounts, for here is a man who had not heard of the resurrection from the dead, yet believing in it. Christ had not risen from the dead. There had been no such chapter for Abraham to read as that wonderful one, the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to Corinthians; and yet his faith seemed to have a revelation within itself. God must keep his promise. Therefore, if I, in obedience to him, put the promised seed to death, God can raise him up, for he must keep his promise. He cannot lie.

**20.** *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

Blind as he was, he could see more than many that have good eyes, for he had the eyes of faith. There is no end to the blessing that faith can bestow upon others. A believing man can bless his children. I believe in the blessings of good men. Why should I not? If they are believers, they have power with God. Their wishes are prayers. Their prayers are heard. Their blessings then are realities.

**21.** *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

That wonderful staff on which he leaned when he came out of Jabbok —that wonderful staff with which he crossed this Jordan in his poverty, but after which he became two bands.

**22.** *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.*

Faith touches all sense of things — even a funeral and bones, too, for faith is good at everything. She can sweep the house and seek diligently. She can enter heaven. She can go to the gates of death. Oh! for more of it!

**23.** *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.*

Their faith made them hide him, for that faith laid hold of God, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

**24-26.** *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*

### **HEBREWS 11:32-40**

**32.** *And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:*

There are some names, in this chapter, which we should hardly have expected to see there, the characters mentioned having been so disfigured by serious faults, and flaws, and failings; but the distinguishing feature of faith was there in every instance, and especially in the case of Samson. Perhaps there was no more childlike faith, in any man, than there was in him; who but a man full of faith would have hurled himself upon a thousand men with no weapon in his hand but the jawbone of an ass? There was a wondrous confidence in God in that weak, strong man, which though it does not excuse his faults, yet nevertheless puts him in the ranks of the believers. Happy is the man or woman who believeth in God. There were multitudes of others, beside those whom the apostle named, —

**33.** *Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness,*

Is that as great an exploit as subduing kingdoms? Yes, that it is; to have, by faith, preserved a holy character, in such a world of temptation as this, is a far grander achievement than to have conquered any number of kingdoms by force of arms.

**33, 34.** *Obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong,*

Do you notice how, every now and then, there is the mention of a feat which seems altogether beyond you; but then there follows one, in which you can be a partaker with these heroes and heroines

of faith? It may be that you have never “quenched the violence of fire;” yet, often enough, it has been true of you that, by faith, “out of weakness” you have been “made strong.” Others —

**34-35.** *Waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:*

What wondrous faith it was which sustained the saints under the awful tortures to which they were subjected! The story harrows one’s heart even to read it; what must it have been actually to endure?

**36-39.** *And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

These worthies lived before Christ came; but, since then, equally noble exploits have been performed by the heroes and heroines of faith. The Christian martyrs have shown the extremity of human endurance when they have been sustained by faith; and the head-roll of Christian heroes, since their Lord ascended to heaven, is longer and even brighter than that of the faithful ones who came before them in the earlier dispensation.

**40.** *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

The new dispensation is necessary to complete the old, the New Testament is the complement of the Old Testament, and New Testament saints join hands with Old Testament elders. Let us all be worthy of our high pedigree; and may God grant that, if the saints of these latter days are to perfect the history of the Church of Christ, the end may not be less heroic than the beginning was! A true poem should gather force as it grows, and its waves of thought should roll in with greater power as it nears its climax; so should the mighty poem of faith’s glorious history increase in depth and power as it gets nearer to its grand consummation, that God may be glorified

yet more and more, through all his believing children. So may it be! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from HEBREWS 11:1-13; AND 32 - 40.

## **HEBREWS 12**

The apostle, having deserted the heroes of the faith, represents them as witnesses of the great race which Christians in all ages have to run. All through the chapter he keeps up the idea of the great Olympic games, and represents the saints as occupied with spiritual athletics in the presence of God, the angels, and glorified men.

*1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

In those games, those who ran and wrestled wore very little clothing, or often nothing at all. A runner might lose the race through being entangled by his scarf, so he laid aside everything that might hinder or hamper him. Oh, for that blessed consecration to our heavenly calling, by which everything that would hinder us shall be put aside, that we may give ourselves, disentangled, to the great gospel to race!

*2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

His race is complete; his wrestling is over; so he sits down with the great Judge of all as the One who has won his crown for ever. Let us look to him.

*3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

Think how he wrestled, think how he ran; and let your consideration of him nerve you for your struggle, and brace up every muscle of your spirit so that you will be determined that, as he won, so will you by the divine help of him who is “the author and finisher of our faith.”

*4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

Paul reminds you that, in your wrestling, you may have to endure a still sterner struggle: “Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

**5-7.** *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

The apostle's intention is to harden us to any suffering that may come to us in this mortal life. He does so first by showing us that we are like wrestlers and racers, and that we must expect to endure much hardship if we are to win the crown. We are to "endure hardness." The crown cannot be won without it. You know what men will do to win an earthly crown; but the heavenly crown is an immortal, unfading one; so how much more may be expected of you in the way of patient endurance in your heart to win it. Then Paul changes the figure, and says, "You are the sons of God, and that is the reason why you are admitted to the arena where these sacred strugglings take place, and as you are the sons of God, you must endure the chastening rod. Dear brethren in Christ, will not each one of you thankfully accept it, and say, "As this is one of the evidences of my sonship, I will thank God for every cut of the rod, and bless his holy name for every twig of it."

**8.** *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

A man may neglect such a child as that, for he is not his legitimate child; and God does not care for professors, who, though they seem to be his children, are not his true sons, so they are pampered, indulged, and spoiled, and left to enjoy themselves while they are here, as the Lord well knows that they will have nothing but sorrow and misery hereafter.

**9, 10.** *Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

God is the Father of our spiritual nature, so, if he pleases to chasten us for our profit, shall we not humbly yield ourselves up to him, and let him do with us whatever he wills?

**11.** *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous:*

It would not be chastening if it were a joy to us; it is necessary, in order that it may be chastening, that it should be grievous.

**11.** *Nevertheless afterward-*

Oh, what melodious music there is in those two words to ears and hearts that are divinely taught to appreciate it! “Nevertheless afterward” —

**11-14.** *It yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men,-*

Run after it. It will often seem to run away from you, so you must pursue it, and capture it: “Follow peace with all men,” —

**14, 15.** *And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God;*

“Lest he should come short of the grace of God,” and as it were fall back. Paul is still keeping to his illustration drawn from the wrestling at the Olympic games. Sometimes, the wrestler gave his opponent a back fall, and down he went, and so lost the crown; beware lest such a fall should happen to you in your spiritual wrestling.

**15, 16.** *Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator,-*

Fornication was the special sin of that age: in fact, so common was it that the heathen did not reckon it to be a sin at all. Knowing of the tendency to licentiousness in all around them, Paul specially warned the Hebrew Christians against that horrible evil.

**16, 17.** *Or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

His father could not transfer to him the blessing which he had given to Jacob.

**18-21.** *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and*

*tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)*

“You have come to something very different from that mount of terror even to a great gathering of holy being in the midst of whom you should exceedingly rejoice.”

**22-27.** *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

All that is eternal must, of course, endure for ever. The everlasting covenant, “the glorious gospel of the blessed God,” the purchase of the Saviour’s blood, the work of the Holy Spirit,-all these shall stand fast for ever, they can never be shaken.” The immutable Word spoken by the mouth of the unchanging God, liveth and abideth for ever!

**28, 29.** *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.*

The God who gave the law on Sinai has never changed: the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of Moses who overthrew Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea, and slew Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the multitude of murmurers, idolaters, and fornicators in the wilderness, — “this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.” I would again remind

you of what I have often said concerning the wickedness of putting into this passage words that the Holy Spirit never inspired Paul to write. Many people say, "God out of Christ is a consuming fire:" but Paul wrote nothing of the sort. It is "our God" — and he is not "our God" except as we view him in Christ,-who is "a consuming fire." How greatly we ought to reverence him, and how earnestly we ought to ask of him that the divine fire may burn up everything in us that ought to be consumed, that only that may remain which will first endure the great shaking, and which will afterwards endure the great burning. May the Lord graciously grant to each one of us that grace which shall abide the fire!

## HEBREWS 12

After giving a long list of the heroes of faith, the apostle adds:

—  
**1-3.** *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him-*

Look to him, look at him, study him, know all you can about him-, meditate upon him, —

**3, 4.** *That endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

It has not come to that yet with any of you who are now here; you have not shed your blood for Christ yet, for these are not martyr days, so can you be wearied and faint? If you run with the footmen, and they weary you how will you contend with horses? We ought to be ashamed of ourselves if we grow weary in a race that is so easy compared with that of the men and women who laid down their lives for Christ's sake.

**5.** *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*

Both these states are wrong, either to think nothing of chastisement or else to faint under it; we are not to fall into either evil, but to keep the golden mean between them.

**6. *For whom the Lord loveth —***

The Greek word is a strong one, and means, “whom the Lord tenderly loveth —

**6. *He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.***

Everyone does not receive the like measure of chastisement, and he that has the largest share of the love of God will feel the most of his chastising hand. Are you not willing to take that portion, and to be among the Lord’s tenderly loved ones?

**7. *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?***

God had one Son without sin, but he never had a son without suffering and the Son who was without sin was the “Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

**8. *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.***

If you are without chastisement, you may bear the name of sons, but you are not really so; you are mere professors.

**9. *Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?***

Should we not give him reverence when we are chastened, instead of murmuring and complaining against him, thus calling him to account at our judgment-seat? Oh, yes let us be in willing subjection to him, and the more willingly subject we are, the less painful will the chastisement be. Our bitterest sorrow will be found at the root of our self-will; and when our self-will is gone, the bitterness of our sorrow will be past.

**10. *For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.***

Is there no way for us to “be partakers of his holiness” but through chastening? It would seem so from the wording of this verse. The Lord, as our loving Father, makes use of the rod that he may make us to be truly holy.

**11.** *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous,*  
How could it be? It would lose the very nature of chastening if there were joy in it.

**11.** *But grievous: nevertheless afterward —*

These are truly blessed words: “nevertheless afterward” —

**11-13.** *It yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

Come, children of God, do not be despondent because of your tribulations. You are in a race, so run even while you are smarting from your chastisements, still run, and keep on running until you win the prize.

**14.** *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

The holy God can only be seen by holy eyes. He must make us like himself before we can see him.

**15.** *Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God;*

Seeming to have grace, and yet not really having it

**15.** *Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;*

Sin is a bitter thing and a defiling thing and unless we look diligently, it will grow in our hearts like the weeds grow in our gardens after a heavy rain, it will spring up before we are aware of it.

**16.** *Lest there be any fornicator,*

Fornication was far too common in the early church, but it was not thought to be sin by the great mass of the heathen; but, oh, what a defiling sin it is!

**16.** *Or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

He was thus guilty of spiritual fornication, preferring his meat to his Maker, thinking more of one morsel of meat than of his birthright.

**17.** *For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

He could not get his father to change his mind concerning Jacob; on the contrary, he said, "I have blessed him; yea, and he shall be blessed." His many tears availed not, they were not repenting tears, but only selfish ones. He did not repent that he had bartered his birthright for a mess of pottage; he regretted that he had lost the blessing, that was all.

**18-21.** *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)*

We have not come to that mount of terror, for we are not under the law but under grace; we have come to a very different place from that.

**22-24.** *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

We are come to that blood, and it is that blood which has made such a change in us. We may rejoice together now, and we ought to do so, if we are all one in Christ Jesus.

**25-29.** *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore we receiving a kingdom which*

*cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.*

Not “God out of Christ,” as some say, but God in Christ, God anyhow is a consuming fire, and we should each one pray, “Consuming fire, refining fire, go through my heart and purge me of all that can be consumed! Holy Spirit, drive out of me all that can be shaken and removed, that only thine abiding kingdom may remain in me, and thine shall be the praise and the glory for ever! Amen.”

## **HEBREWS 12**

**1, 2.** *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus*

The Apostle seems to say, since so many look on from heaven, and earth, and hell, and we are runners in the great life race, let us strip to it: let us throw aside everything that would make our running difficult; every weight, however golden; every garment, however richly embroidered, lest it should entangle us in our course. And then when we have set out, let us not conclude that we have won the victory, but “run with patience,” on, on, on, till at last we reach the goal.

**2, 3.** *The author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

What a runner in the race was he! and what a race he ran! While we see him at the end of the course, holding out the crown, let us remember that he knows all the trials of the way, knows what pressure must be put upon ourselves ere we can reach the mark.

**4.** *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

Your battles have been nothing yet; ye think yourselves martyrs. What have you done? What have you suffered? What have ye endured, compared with your Lord, compared with the saints of old?

**5, 6.** *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the*

*Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

Here is another noble reason for patience. That same trial which, on the one hand, comes from man, viewed in another way comes from, God, and is a chastening. Let us accept it at his hands, regarding it as a token of sonship.

**7, 8.** *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

You have not your Father's love; you are not recognized as an honour-able member of his family.

**9-13.** *Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

The Apostle cheers up those who are tried, with the reflection that the good which will come out of their trouble will abundantly recompense them. They are not to expect to see that good at once. It will come afterwards — not yet. No reasonable man expects the harvest at the same time that he sows. You must wait a while — bear with patience — have confidence in God — and all your trials will end well.

**14.** *Follow peace with all men,*

You will not always get it, but follow it — run after it.

**14-17.** *And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how*

*that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

He sold his birthright. He could not have the pottage and the birthright too; therefore, he chose the pottage. He must stand to it. And if here, today, we deliberately choose the pleasures of this world, we must not marvel if we have to stand to them for ever.

**18-24.** *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

The center around which we gather in these days is not Sinai with its thunder and its fire; it is the cross; nay it is heaven; it is the enthroned Saviour; it is the great Mediator of a better covenant than that of which Moses came to speak. We gather there, and we make no a part of that vast throng that now surrounds that center. Oh! that we while we hear the sweet voice of the gospel, may lend it a willing ear, and may we not be among the number of those who reject the voice that speaks from heaven to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**25-28.** *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven, Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom*

*which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*

For let us not think that we are not to be reverent because we gather at the gospel's call. Let us not dream that God who is a consuming fire on the top of Sinai, is less terrible under the gospel than under the law, for it is not so.

**29.** *For our God is a consuming fire.*

### **HEBREWS 12:1-6**

**1.** *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,*

Or "entangle us."

**1-3.** *And let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

The Lord does not wish his people's hands to hang down, and their knees to become weak, so in this passage, as in many others, he administers gracious remedies. Among the rest, he bids us consider his own dear Son. Shall we faint under our small afflictions when he endured so well under his heavy burdens? Come, be strengthened, my weak heart.

"HIS way was much rougher and darker than thine;  
Did Christ thy Lord suffer, and wilt thou repine?"

**4.** *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

It has hardly come to blows and bruises yet — certainly not to bloody strokes. Ye have not lost blood yet for Christ.

**5.** *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*

Neither think too little of it, nor too much of it — too little of it by despising it and not listening to the voice of the rod, nor too much of it by fainting when thou art rebuked of him.

6. *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

Oh! what comfort there is here! Whenever we are under the scourging hand of God, how we ought to be cheered with the thought that this is a part of the heritage of the children. There are Elis who spoil their children. God is not one of them. He spares not the rod, and the more he loves, often the more he corrects. A tree of common fruit may be let alone so long as there is some little fruit on it, but the very best fruit gets the sharpest pruning; and I have noticed that in those countries where the best wine is made, the vine-dressers cut the shoots right close in, and in the winter you cannot tell that there is a vine there at all unless you watch very carefully. They must cut them back sharp to get sweet clusters. The Lord does thus with his beloved. It is not anger. Afflictions are not always anger. There are often tokens of great love.

This exposition consisted of readings from ISAIAH 35. HEBREWS 12:1-6.

### **HEBREWS 12:1-17**

May the Spirit of God graciously instruct us while we read this chapter!

You know that, in the eleventh chapter, the apostle has pictured the ancient worshipers and their victories. Imagine that you see them mounting in their chariots of fire up to their seats in heaven; behold them going from the mouths of lions, from the deserts, and mountains, and dens and caves of the earth, up to their glorious thrones on high where they recline in ease and honour.

The apostle then introduces us to a race-course, in which he represents all these conquerors as sitting upon seats all round the course, watching those who are about to run; and thus he begins:-  
Verse

*1, 2. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;*

It was no excitement to run if there were no onlookers. The spur to the racers and wrestlers in the Grecian games was found in the eyes of those who gazed, in the clapping of their hands, in the shouting of their applause, as well as in the prizes that awaited the

winners. Behold, my brethren, even our most private acts are looked upon by the millions of eyes of the great cloud of witnesses. Angels tell the news of how we run the great race, and they rejoice when we prosper. Let us "run well" because so many are looking on at us, and just as the Grecian runner stripped himself of his clothes before he started, so "let us lay aside every weight," the weight of sin, the weight of care, the weight of grief, the weight of worldliness, and everything else that might hinder us. Above all, let us beware of that sin which, like a trailing garment, might entangle our feet, and trip us up, for, if we fall, our opponent will certainly win the prize. Look well to that sin to which you are the most liable. We all have some besetting sin; let us especially be on the watch against that. While we keep all the wall with diligence, let us set a double guard at the most vulnerable point. "And let us run with patience" or "endurance." There is to be a combination of the active and passive in the Christian; he must be able to endure and yet be able still to work. "Let us run with patience, "run when we are out of breath, run when our bones ache, run when the prize seems to be further off than ever, and to be hidden from our eyes, run when the hot sun makes us athirst,-still "let us run with patience the race that is set before us," for it is he that endureth unto the end who shall be saved;- not merely the starter in the race, for there are many who begin, and who begin not in the power of the Spirit of God, and who therefore do not persevere unto the end. By this sign shall the true children of God be known, that they run with endurance unto the end, "looking unto Jesus." As the wife of the Persian nobleman said, when her husband asked her what she thought of Darius, that she had not looked at him, she had no eyes for any man but her husband, so the Christian has no eyes for any but Christ, -- "looking unto Jesus,"--keeping his eye always upon him, and so running the Christian race. Jesus is here delightfully called "the author and finisher of our faith." In most of the arts, there is a division of labour, one man begins, and another completes; there is scarcely anything that is completed by one man; but the stupendous work of our salvation was not only commenced but it was also completed by the Lord Jesus Christ alone. Let us look unto him then. This will help us to persevere unto the end because he persevered to the end.

*2. Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

It was this joy that made Christ strong to endure in the day of his sorrow and joy must make you also strong to endure unto the end. He had the joy of anticipated victory. It “was set before him,” and so he “endured the cross, despising the shame.” He ran with a heavy cross on his back, and yet he ran faster than you or I have run: he ran because he had more joy than we have. So, my brethren, let us live in the joy of heaven, let us live in the joy of ultimate victory, and this will enable us to bear all the toils and trials of our present life.

*3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

Luther says, “When I think of what Christ suffered, I am ashamed to call anything that I have endured, suffering for his sake.” He carried his heavy cross, but we only carry a sliver or two of it; he drank his cup to the dreg, and we do but sip a drop or two at the very most. “Consider him.” Consider how he suffered far more than you can ever suffer, and how he is now crowned with glory and honour; and so you are to be like him, descend like him into the depths of agony, that with him you may rise to the heights of glory.

*4-7. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

Here is a little variation in the subject. First we had the trials which come from the world, these we are to endure looking to Christ for grace to enable us to overcome them. Now we have the trials which come from God, and here nature becomes an assistant to grace. We are reminded that children have to be chastened, and therefore, if we are the children of God we must expect to be chastened by him. Note in the fifth verse, the two evils of which we are in danger,-either of deepening God’s chastenings or else of fainting under them; either of thinking too little or too much of

them. HAPPY is the Christian who ever takes the middle course, and never despises the chastenings of the Lord, nor ever faints under them. Note, in the sixth verse, that we are to expect sharp blows from God's chastening hand. That word "encourageth" is a wrong word: "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." The scourge was ever a most severe form of punishment. God will not spare his children when they need to be chastened; they shall have some blows as hard as he can well lay them on, that is to say, as hard as such a loving heart as his will permit him to give. They shall have such blows that each one of them shall have to cry out, "I am broken in sunder, my heart is smitten and withered like grass." And this is to be the treatment for every son whom God receives; not for some of them, but for all. "He scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

**8.** *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

He does not say, "then are ye alone." He is speaking about those who profess to be the children of God, writing concerning those who claim to be members of the Lord's family, and he stigmatizes with one of the most dreadful of names those who may escape without chastisement; but, brethren who among us would have the pleasure of carnal ease if with it we are to have the shame of spiritual illegitimacy?

**9,10.** *Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure;*

There was, possibly, much of their own temper mixed with their chastisements, they let off their wrath upon us sometimes by the medium of chastisement, but God never chastens his children merely out of anger.

**10-12.** *But he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;*

Let not your service to God slacken. Lift up to God that which was idly hanging down through despondency. Let not your prayers grow weak through grief, but strengthen the feeble knees.

**13-15.** *And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;*

For, alas ! under the means of grace, there are many who do “fail of the grace of God.” They get something that they think is like grace, but it is not the true grace of God, and they ultimately fall from it, and perish. What we need is to have unfailing grace, and power so to hold on that, at the last, we may inherit the crown of life, but for this we must look diligently, for the best of us has shrewd cause to suspect himself, and in church-fellowship, we ought to be very watchful lest the church as a whole should fail through lack of the true grace of God, and especially lest any root of bitterness springing up among us should trouble us, and thereby many be defiled.

**16.** *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

Those who seek the pleasures of the flesh rather than the pleasures of a higher world are here put side by side with Esau. Now Esau sold the right to his future heritage for a present mess of pottage, and many there are who do something very like that,—sell their souls for a little Sunday-trading, or for a little carnal company, a little of that fool’s mirth which is like the crackling of thorns under a pot. They are willing to damn themselves to all eternity because they cannot bear the jeers and sneers of a ribald world. O brethren, let us not be like them or like Esau!

**17.** *For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought at carefully with tears.*

He never repented of his sin, but only of the consequences of it. He never sought pardon of God, but only sought to inherit the blessing. And there will be many, who have lived for this world, and loved it, who, when they wake up in another world, will begin to

seek the blessing, but they will be rejected. This may happen even in this world. If they only seek to die the death of the righteous, and seek not the pardon of their sin, they shall hear the Lord say to them, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."

### **HEBREWS 12:1-17**

**1, 2.** *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

We can have no doubt about the great truths which we believe, for we are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses. The former chapter gives us the names of many of these glorious bearers of testimony, who all by faith achieved great wonders and so bore witness to the truth of God. Having therefore no room for doubt let us throw our whole strength into our high calling, and run with patience having our eyes always fixed upon him, the beginner and finisher of our faith, who has run the race himself and won the prize, and now sits down on the right hand of the throne of God.

**3, 4.** *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

It has never come to a bloody sweat with you as with him, nor to death upon a cross, as in his case. Shall the disciple be above his master or the servant above his lord?

**5, 6.** *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

With doting parents it is not so: often him whom his mother loveth is allowed to do as he pleases and to escape chastening, but this is folly. The love of God is higher and wiser than the partialities

of parents. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;” it is a token of his favour to us that he takes the trouble to remove our love of sin by sharp and bitter pain.

**7-10.** *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

What a bright light this sheds upon all affliction, that it is for our profit, that it is thereby we are made partakers of the holiness of God. Oh, blessed result from a little smart and bitter.

**11-13.** *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

Look at chastisement then in the divine light, and be comforted, be strengthened, be healed of the infirmity of your weakness, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

**14.** *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” A man’s god is like himself, and until we become like God we cannot see God; we misunderstand God until we have been trained to imitate him.

**15-17.** *Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

It was done and could not be undone. Does it not seem strange that after speaking to us about being God's sons and favoured with his love, yet even then, in that clear blaze of light, there comes in this caution against fornication and profanity. Ah me! how near a foul spot may be to lily-like whiteness. How Judas may sit side by side with favoured and true-hearted apostles, aye, and may be near the Master, too. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." And, oh, friends, if at any time the pottage should seem very sweet and we should be very hungry, if the world's gain should be almost necessary to our livelihood, and we are tempted to do an unrighteous thing to get it, let us take care, for Esau could not undo the terrible act of selling his birthright, neither could we if we were permitted to do so. God grant we may be spared from such a dreadful crime!

## **HEBREWS 13**

### **1. *Let brotherly love continue.***

It is supposed to be there already; let it continue, not only love of a common kind, such as we are to have to all men, but that special "brotherly love" which Christians bear to one another as members of one family. "Let brotherly love continue."

### **2. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.***

Abraham did so, and Lot did so; they thought they were entertaining ordinary strangers, and they washed their feet; and prepared their food but it turned out that they had entertained angels. Some people will never entertain angels unawares, for they never entertain anybody. May we be given to hospitality, for that should be part of the character of saints.

### **3. *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them;***

Christian people who have got into trouble through being Christian persons who have been shut up in prison for righteousness' sake; there were many such in Paul's day. Sympathize with them, says the apostle, "as bound with them."

### **3. *And them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.***

So that, if you are not now in adversity, you may be before long. Therefore, have a fellow feeling for those who are in trouble. If you are not yourself distressed, you are not out of the reach of such a thing; therefore be tender towards your afflicted brethren.

**4, 5.** *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

There is a fortune for you, that is a pension to fall back upon. You may very well be content to leave your temporal concerns in the hands of God, for he hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Why, if you believe that one promise of God, he will be better to you than ten thousand friends who promise to provide for you! The Provider in heaven is better than any provider on earth. A beautiful motto is that of the old house of Chester, "God's providence is my inheritance."

**6, 7.** *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

It seems that there were special persons, who were leaders in the Church of God, who were to be remembered, and thought upon, and considered. They were set apart for this world: "them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God." They were leaders among the saints, and Paul would have the rank and file imitate them in their confident trust in the Lord Jesus Christ: "whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation:" —

**8, 9.** *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.*

Do not believe one thing today, and another thing tomorrow; be not carried about, like the thistledown in the wind. Have a faith of your own, know what you believe, and stand to it firmly.

**9, 10.** *For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar,*

Yes, true religion cannot exist without an altar, but what kind of altar is it? Is it a material altar? Far from it; but “we have an altar,”

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**10.** *Whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.*

They have nothing to do with it, for they are still under the old ceremonial law; and those whose religion consists in outward rites and ceremonies can never eat of the spiritual altar whereat spiritual men eat, for they do not understand the scripture, and they still serve the Mosaic tabernacle.

**11-13.** *For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*

Outside the gate, was the place of Christ’s atoning death. “Without the camp,” is the place where his servants will find themselves most at home.

**14.** *For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

We cannot stop in the condemned city; we must be outside its walls. Our Lord went out of the city to die, and we must go without the camp to live.

**15, 16.** *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

Christian people should be always doing good. As God is ever doing good, so we can never say we have done all we ought to do and will do no more: “To do good and to communicate,” that is, to communicate of your substance, and of your charitable help, “forget not.”

**17-19.** *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.*

The movements of God's servants may be controlled by prayer. You cannot tell how much of blessing will come to your own souls, through the ministry, if you are in the habit of praying about it. The man who comes up to God's house, having prayed for God to bless the preacher, is not likely to go away unprofited.

**20-25.** *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen.*

Does not that blessing seem to come across the centuries as fresh as if we heard the apostle speak it with his living lips? Oh, to feel it true tonight! "Grace be with you all. Amen."

### **HEBREWS 13:1-21**

This is a practical chapter at the close of this most instructive Epistle.

**1.** *Let brotherly love continue.*

The word "continue" implies that the "brotherly love" exists, there are many things which might put an end to it, so see to it that, as far as you are concerned, it continues. Under all provocations, and under all disappointments, "let brotherly love continue."

**2, 3.** *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.*

And being likely therefore to take your own turn of suffering, and to need the sympathy of your fellow-Christians. Show sympathy to others while they need it, and they will gratefully remember you when you are in bonds or in adversity.

**4.** *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

And terrible will be their doom when God does judge them. They may think that, because they sin in secret, therefore they shall escape punishment; but it shall not be so. Whether men judge them or not, God will judge them.

**5.** *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

You have a grand reserve, therefore. What you have in possession is only a little spending money to use on the road to heaven, but “he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” You may confidently fall back upon the providence of God in all times of straitness and need.

**6-8.** *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*

It is for your own benefit to remember in your prayers those who preach the Word of God to you, for what can they do without divine assistance and how can you be profited by them unless they are first blessed of God? Remember them, therefore.

**9.** *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.*

Do not put yourself into every man’s hand to let him play with you as he pleases. The fish that never nibbles at the bait is not likely to be caught by the hook, and he who will not give heed to “divers and strange doctrines” is not likely to be carried away in the net of heresy.

**9.** *For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*

Some in the apostle’s day made religion to consist almost entirely in observing certain rules as to what they ate and what they drank. “Be not so foolish,” says Paul, “there is something better than that; seek to have your heart established with grace.”

**10.** *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.*

Those who cling to the external and ceremonial observances of religion have no right to the privileges which belong to those who come to the spiritual altar; they cannot share that secret.

**11-14.** *For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

Then, my brother or sister, do not look for a continuing city here. Do not build your nest on any one of the trees of earth, for they are all marked for the axe, and they will all have to come down, and your nest too, if you have built upon them.

**15.** *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

If you are believers in Christ, you are God's priests, and this is the sacrifice that you are continually to offer, — the fruit of your lips, giving thanks to God's name.

**16.** *But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

We are to do good to others, to communicate of our own good things to those who need them, and to do this at some sacrifice to ourselves, "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

**17-19.** *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.*

You must have noted how often the apostle asks for the prayers of those to whom he is writing, so we are following a good example when we ask you to pray for us.

**20, 21.** *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*



# JAMES

## JAMES 1

1. *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.*

“Where are the lost ten tribes?” asks somebody. They never were lost. That is a mere piece of nonsense. There were, and there are still, twelve tribes of Israel, as much one as the other. Ask any Jew if it is not so. James writes to all his compatriots by nature, and to all the fellow-citizens of the saints by grace, and greets them. What a strange greeting it is!

2. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*

Or “trials.” Do not be sorry about it, be thankful for it. The gold should be glad to be put into the crucible; the Christian should rejoice to be tested and tried. Not only count it joy, but count it “all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.”

3, 4. *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

You need to grow; you will not grow without trials. You need to learn; you will not learn without affliction. It is God’s school for you. Be thankful, therefore, when these afflictions come. They are the rumbling wagons of your Father, in which he sends you choice treasure. They are black ships that come from afar, loaded with precious things. But mind that you do get this patience; and that, when you have it, you have still more of it: “Let patience have her perfect work.”

5. *If any of you lack wisdom,*

Ah, James, you need not say, “If any of you lack wisdom,” for we all lack it! We are all poor, foolish creatures: “If any of you lack wisdom.”

5. *Let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

The Lord might very well upbraid us for our folly, and say, “Poor child, I will give you wisdom; yet you are very foolish.” But

he does not say that. He “giveth to all men liberally; and upbraideth not.” Let him who lacks wisdom ask of God: “and it shall be given him.” Can the Lord give wisdom? Surely, we must study, learn, and gain experience before we can know, and then afterwards knowledge, rightly used, groweth into wisdom. Can God give us wisdom ready made? Ah, yes, he can! He gives wisdom if we ask for it.

**6.** *But let him ask in faith,*

A man who has no wisdom can have faith; let him use his faith to get wisdom with it: “Let him ask in faith.”

**6, 7.** *Nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

He may receive something of the Lord; but he may not think that he shall.

It may come as a spontaneous gift of sovereign grace; but we have no right to expect an answer to prayer when we pray in a wavering style.

**8.** *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

He sees double; he runs after two objects; and therefore he staggers across the street: he “is unstable in all his ways.”

**9.** *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:*

Being lifted up by the grace of God to sit among the princes of Israel.

**10.** *But the rich, in that he is made low:*

Hard work this! Still, the child of God should rejoice in it, for now that he is stripped of earthly things, he finds his all in God.

**10-12.** *Because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation:*

Or, “endureth trial.” Blessed is the man who is tried and tested, and who lives through it; who conquers, notwithstanding all the battle and struggle through which he passes. We should say, “Blessed is the man who is not tried;” but it is not so. He who, bearing the heavy load, receives gracious strength to sustain him

under it, gets a greater blessing than the man who escapes the burden.

**12, 13.** *For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God:*

That would be nonsense, and falsehood. When a man is seduced to evil, when evil casts its attractive spell over him, let him not blame God.

**13, 14.** *For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

God tries men. God does not, in the sense in which the word is here used, tempt men. Satan tempts: God tries. But the same trial may be both a temptation and a trial; and it may be a trial from God's side, and a temptation from Satan's side, just as Job suffered from Satan, and it was a temptation; but he also suffered from God through Satan, and so it was a trial to him.

**15.** *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

That is the pedigree of sin; it is born of lust, and it brings forth dust. Any sin, whatever it is, if we cling to it and love it, will bring forth death; rest assured of that. The only hope we can have of eternal life is by being parted from sin. That must be taken away from us; for there shall never enter into heaven anything that defileth. We have, from day to day, to fight against sin, till it is utterly put away from us.

**16, 17.** *Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

God never turns from us; nor, in any way whatever, changes; he is the same God, ready always to bless us, ready to save us tonight as much as any other Thursday night. Ah, dear friends, what variableness we have! The other day we were frost-bitten, and crying out with the cold; and now tonight, perhaps, we feel dull, and stupid, and heavy, because it is so hot. Yet, what a mercy it is that God has no variableness, neither shadow of a turning; and we may come to him tonight, and say, "Lord, visit us as thou art wont to do!

Revive us and refresh us. Put us into a lively, brisk, happy frame of mind tonight, and send us on our way rejoicing.”

**18.** *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

We are his creatures, but we are better than his other creatures; for he has made us twice over, We are his twice-born creatures; and we are the first ripe fruit of his creation, dedicated to his praise, gathered to his glory “a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” Oh, that God would help us to honour him, and to live truly consecrated to him!

**19.** *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear,*

It is a great thing to have an open ear. Some are very slow to hear, especially to hear the Word of God, and the voice of God speaking that Word. Oh, to have our ears unstopped, that we may hear every syllable of truth gladly, cheerfully, retentively! God grant us that swiftness of hearing tonight!

**19.** *Slow to speak, slow to wrath:*

For, sometimes, when men are very quick to speak, they are also very quick in other respects as well; and volubility may be accompanied by a tendency to heat or passion: “Slow to speak, slow to wrath.”

**20.** *For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

Satan does not cast out Satan. Anger does not overcome evil. We may think we do well to be angry; but that will very seldom be the case.

**21.** *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

Perhaps you have seen a man grafting a tree. What a gash he makes in the tree before he puts in the graft! How he wounds it to make the sap flow into the new wood! If the Lord has made any of your hearts bleed tonight by the sharp cutting of his Spirit, we are not sorry, if it shall the better prepare you for receiving the grafts of his own nature, and his own Word.

**22.** *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

It is a pity when a man deceives himself; he must be an arch-deceiver.

**23-25.** *For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein,*

Perseverance to the end is wanted: "Continueth therein."

**25.** *He being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

The blessedness of true religion lies very much in the practical effect of it. Hearing is pleasant; but doing is the effectual proof of grace.

**26.** *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*

James settles that matter off very peremptorily. An unbridled tongue indicates a godless heart.

**27.** *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

This is not the secret part of religion. Of that we read elsewhere. But this is the very dress that true religion puts on; charitably caring for the most destitute of our fellow-creatures, and holy walking, that we be not as the men of the world are: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

## **JAMES 1**

**1.** *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.*

The apostle James evidently believed in no lost ten tribes, as some nowadays do. They never were lost; the Israelites whom we see nearly every day belong to venue of all the twelve tribes, so James addressed his Epistle "To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting."

**2.** *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*

Or, trials.

**3-5.** *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom,-*

That is just what most of us do lack: “If any of you lack wisdom,” —

**5.** *Let him ask of God,*

That is the short road to true knowledge, — to pray. Study is good, no doubt, for the acquisition of knowledge; but praying is the best way to obtain true wisdom.

**5, 6.** *That giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing unwaivering.*

For the very essence of prayer lies in believing that God can and will give us the things which we seek at his hands.

**6.** *For he that wavereth-*

The man who does not know whether prayer will succeed or not —

**6.** *Is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

You can never tell what will become of the wave it goes just where it is driven; and there are many men who can be good, after a certain fashion, if they are in good company; but they can be just as bad if the wind blows from another quarter. But if we have true faith in God, and true faith in prayer, we shall not be “like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”

**7.** *For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

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

**8.** *A double minded man-*

A man with two minds, a mind to the religious and another mind to enjoy the pleasures of the world, — such a man —

**8.** *Is unstable in all his ways.*

There is nothing solid or substantial about him, nothing enduring; you cannot reckon upon him, for he is blown hither and thither, as chaff flies before the wind.

**9.** *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:*

For the gospel lifts him up out of his poverty, and makes him a child of God, who is spiritually rich even though he is poor in temporal things.

**10.** *But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.*

Let him not therefore reckon upon his wealth as though it were anything but a trust and a burden laid upon him, for he will have to leave it, and he himself, “as the flower of the grass, shall pass away” Let him rejoice to get down to the Rock of ages, let him lay hold of eternal things as if he had nothing else in which he could trust.

**11, 12.** *For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation:-*

Or, trial: the man that holds on and holds out under it, and does not give way under it; blessed is the man that is tried: —

**12, 13.** *For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God:*

Here we must take the word “tempted” in its dark meaning; for the scriptural word “temptation” means two very different things. When we are drawn towards evil, that is the black meaning of the word temptation; but when we are tested or tried in order that it may be seen that the good in us is real, that is the bright meaning of the word temptation. In that sense, God did tempt (try or test) Abraham, but not in the other sense.

**13-15.** *For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

There is the parentage, and the progeny of sin. Sin comes of unbridled desire. A man feels that he must have a certain thing; right or wrong, he is determined to have it. Then there comes of that

determination the overt act of sin; and what comes of that? Why, death, for every sin in its measure helps to kill us, to destroy that which is the real life of our manhood. Every sin is a drop of poison. There are sweets that are poisonous, and the pleasures of sin are of this kind; and let the poison of sin alone, let it work in its natural way, and it will bring forth death. That man, therefore, who lives in sin, and loves it, has nothing before him but everlasting death; he may well tremble.

**16, 17.** *Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,*

It never comes from within our own hearts; it does not even come by imitation of better men; it must come from God.

**17.** *And cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

As every sunbeam comes from the sun, so all grace and virtue must come from God, with whom there is neither parallax nor tropic, as there is with the natural sun. He never declines, he never varies; but he is ever the same. Now, in proof that every thing in us comes from God, James says that our very spiritual life comes from God:-

**18.** *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

True believers have been twice created, and the second time we were begotten again by the Word of God that became the living seed within our spirits, out of which the new life grew, and now we are “a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” Just as the first ears of ripe corn were brought into the sanctuary, and dedicated to God, so are all true believers consecrated persons, the “firstfruits of his creatures.”

**19, 20.** *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

We never do much for truth or goodness by getting angry about it. Whenever a man debates about the truth, and loses his temper, he has also lost his cause. I have heard of one who knew little of true religion, who watched a missionary and a Brahmin disputing, and he decided that the missionary was in the right; when he was asked

why he thought so, he said, “Because he kept cool, and the other man flew into a passion.” Although that may not always be a good test of the truth of the matter in question, it certainly is a good test of how the dispute is going.

**21.** *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

That evil branch is cut away, now be ready to have a branch of a better kind inserted into you, even “the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls,” that you may bring forth better fruit than the old crabbed stock of nature can possibly yield.

**22-26.** *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.*

That which is in the well will come up in the bucket, and that which is in the heart will come up on the tongue. An unbridled tongue denotes an unrenewed heart. Oh, that God would ever give us grace in our heart to move our tongue aright! Then, as the water guides the whole ship, our tongue will guide our whole body, and the whole of our manhood will be under holy government and control.

**27.** *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

Oh, how much this means, — tenderness to others, and tenderness of conscience in ourselves! How much grace we need in order that these two virtues may shine brightly within us!

## **JAMES 1**

**1.** *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.*

According to the teaching of some in the present day, the apostle should have said, "To the two tribes, and the ten that are lost," but he does not say so, nor does Scripture say so. "To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting."

*2. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations;*

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

*3. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*

That is a gem of the first water, well worth finding even if you have to dig in the mines of trial for it.

*4. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

This is true Christian perfection, when every gracious quality is present, and present in perfection. If you have a child, it is a great joy to you to find the child perfect as a child, — with no sense deficient, no limb wanting, and every part rightly formed. Oh, that we may all be such Christians, "perfect and entire, wanting nothing"!

*5. If any of you lack wisdom,*

That is the point in which we are all deficient; and if we are to be wanting in nothing, we must not be lacking in wisdom. How, then, are we to obtain it?

**5.** *Let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

Young beginner, you who have but lately put on Christ, you certainly do lack wisdom; you cannot have attained that boon in all its fullness yet, then go to God for it. He can give it to you, and he will give it to you if you ask him for it.

**6, 7.** *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

It ensures failure in prayer when there is not a decided faith in the one who prays, and it ensures failure of the whole life if there is not a decided determination to serve the Lord.

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

Or,” beauty “ —

**11.** *Of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.*

No matter how luxurious may be his mode of living, no matter how admirable may be his taste, he shall certainly fade, and all that he has will fade, too; and if this be all that can be said of him, that he is a rich man, he is a very poor creature indeed.

**12.** *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

For that is the purpose of our trials, that we should be made to love him more, and love him better. This is that grace which shall win “the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

**13.** *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God : for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*

That is to say, if God permits or sends temptation to any man, it is not an inducement to sin. In that sense, God tempts no man. Those temptations which are said to come from God are trials or tests. In that sense, God does tempt all his people, even as it is written, “God did tempt (or, prove) Abraham.” He tries and tests them, that they may see, and that he may see, whether their faith and their profession be genuine or not, even as the Angel of the Lord said to Abraham, after the trial of his faith, “Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

**14.** *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

This is the essence of an evil temptation, a man’s own lust.

**15.** *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin: when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

There you see the egg, and the larva, and the full-grown fly of sin: “Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

**16.** *Do not err, my beloved brethren.*

Do not err about anything; but, especially, do not err about this matter of temptation, where you may so easily make a blunder: “Do not err, my beloved brethren.”

**17.** *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

Ascribe all evil to yourself, to the world, or to Satan; but ascribe all good unto God. “Every good gift and every perfect gift” — every grain of goodness, every trace of excellence that there is in the world, comes from him; but no evil ever comes from him.

**18.** *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

It is a very delightful idea that we are presented to God as “a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” There is a whole harvest behind us, as Paul also reminds us in Romans 8:19-21: “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because

the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

**19, 20.** *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

Therefore, when we are tempted, let us not be in a hurry to pronounce a verdict on the temptation. If we are slandered and evil spoken of, let us not be quick to reply, or to grow angry. Let us be slow — very slow — to wrath; it will be our wisdom, for no good comes of human wrath: “The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

**21.** *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

Receive it as a graft. As the tree is prepared by the knife to receive the new shoot that is to be put into it, and does so receive it as to make it its own, and to use it for its own fruit-bearing purposes, even in that way “receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”

**22-24.** *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

The best thing to do when you look into a glass, and spy a spot on your face, is to wash it off directly. The true use of hearing the Word, or reading it, is to amend one’s self at once in those points in which the Word discovers us to be faulty. To look in the glass, and not to wash off the spots, is but a piece of vanity; and to hear a sermon, or read a chapter, and not to put into practice what we are taught, is a sad waste of time.

**25.** *But whose looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

There are many who complain of their short memories when they are hearing sermons. Well, then, let them be quick about doing what the sermon bids them, and then they will not be forgetful

hearers. You have heard how one good woman described the effect of the sermon she has heard. She was one who washed wool, and when her minister went round to ask her what she had learned on the previous Sabbath, she did not even recollect the text. "Oh, Janet!" said he, "I am afraid you are a forgetful hearer; I cannot see what good the sermon has done to you." So she took him to the back of her house, where she had a pump; and she worked at the handle while she held underneath the spout a sieve full of wool that was dirty and foul. The water ran through the wool, and through the sieve, and all ran away. "There," she said, "this sieve is like my memory; but, sir, though the water does not stop in the sieve, it washes the wool; and what you preach, though it does not stop in my memory, it has washed my heart and cleansed my life and conversation." Never mind about keeping the water in the sieve so long as it washes the wool. No man can be said to be a forgetful hearer who is a doer of the work that he is bidden to perform.

**26.** *If any man among you seem to be religious, —*

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

**26.** *And bridleth not his tongue, —*

That little noisy troublesome member: "and bridleth not his tongue," —

**26.** *But deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*

If religion does not salt your tongue, and keep it sweet, it has done nothing for you. If the doctor wants to know the state of your health, he says, "Let me see your tongue;" and there is no better test of the health of the mind than to see what is on the tongue. When it gets furred up with unkind words, when it turns black with blasphemy, when it is spotted with lasciviousness, there is something very bad inside the heart, you may be quite sure of that.

**27.** *Pure religion —*

It might be rendered, "Pure ritualism" —

**27.** *And undefiled before God and the Father is this, —*

What is pure ritualism according to the inspired apostle? To wear a white surplice, and to change it for a black gown? I do not

see that in the Scriptures. To have little boys in white to sing for you? I do not see that; but what I do see is this, —

**27.** *To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

I should like to have such a choir as this, a company of Christian men and women robed in unspotted holiness. We shall have such a choir as that around the eternal throne, so they who wish to be there had better begin to practice the music here. The Lord help you to do so, for Christ's sake! Amen.

### **JAMES 1:1-26**

**1.** *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.*

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

**2.** *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*

Do not sorrow over your trials, do not look upon them as misfortunes and calamities, they are black vessels, but they are loaded with gold. Your choicest mercies come to you disguised as your sharpest trials. Welcome them; do not sorrow over them, but rejoice in them.

**3, 4.** *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

Endure everything; suffer everything that God sends you. Bathe yourself in this rough sea, till, by God's blessing, it hath strengthened you and cleansed you, for to that end he sends it, and

that it may perfect you by discipline, educating all your spiritual faculties, and bringing out all your powers for his glory. Shrink not then, seek not to escape by any wrong means from trial, but go through with it, have perfect endurance of it, that ye may be perfect and whole, wanting nothing. "If any of you lack wisdom," and that is the point where you are most likely not to be perfect and entire.

**5.** *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

We are so apt, when we give anything, to diminish the value of it by some unkind remarks, but God doeth not so; he giveth, as he bids us give, with simplicity. There is the gift, and he will not detract from it by upbraiding us. Why, some will upbraid the poor while they help them: "How came you to be in such a condition?" But God saith not so to us; the gift is given in pure liberality, without any upbraiding. Wisdom is a gift. The best wisdom is not that which we acquire by study, but that which is the distinct gift of God in answer to prayer.

**6.** *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

Now on the shore, now sinking back, now driving fearlessly ahead, then sinking down. This is not the kind of man that prevails with God in prayer, it is not the kind of faith we ought to have in God a faith that is very brilliant on the Sunday, and very dull on the Monday: a faith that is triumphant after a sermon, but which seems to be defeated when we get into actual trouble.

**7, 8.** *For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

Unstable in everything. Till you get a single heart, till your whole soul is bound up in confidence in God, you cannot expect to be stable in your ways. "Unite my heart to fear thy name," and then I shall not be a double-minded man.

**9.** *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:*

The lowness of his estate is an exaltation. He shall find in his troubles a double blessing; he shall be made greater by being so little. "But let the rich rejoice in that he is made low," so that what would have been foolish pomp and pride is taken away from him,

and, by the grace of God, he is kept low. "Because as the flower of the grass, he shall pass away."

**10, 11.** *But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.*

Oh! to be delivered from all glorying in such uncertain riches. Whatever God gives you, he may soon take away from you; if he takes it not away, he may take away your power to enjoy it: it is poor, slippery stuff at the very best. Rejoice that you have something better, something lasting.

**12.** *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

It is promised to love, but it is given to endurance. It is the love of God which spies out our love and rewards it, but rewards it partly by trying it, and then ultimately by bringing forth the stephanos, the crown. Men ran for a crown in the Greek games, and could not win the crown without the running. So doth God give to them that run a crown, but not without the running. He giveth to them, first, the privilege of suffering for his name's sake, and then of being rewarded for it.

**13.** *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*

God tries men, but the motive of a trial is that which differences it from a temptation. In a temptation we try a man with a view of inducing him to do wrong; but God tries men to best them, that they may, by finding out their weakness, be saved from doing wrong. He never inclines a heart to evil. While he doeth all things, and is in all things, yet not so that he himself doeth evil, or can be charged therewith.

**14.** *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

This is the wanton harlot that deceives the heart of man: his own desire grown strong and hot till it cometh to be a lusting: this draws

a man away; it baits the hook, and man swallows it and is thus entrapped and enticed.

**15.** *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

There is the history and pedigree of sin. God save us from having any connection with the desire to sin, lest from that we be led into sin, and then from sin descend into death.

**16, 17.** *Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,*

All good from God, all evil from ourselves.

**17.** *And cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

There is variableness and there is the shadow of turning in the sun, but in that greater Father of lights there is neither parallax nor tropic; he is evermore the same, and we may go to him with unwavering confidence because he is the same. Oh! what a blessing to such changing creatures as we are to have an unchanging God! "Of his own will." If you want to know the power of God's will, it never goes towards evil.

**18.** *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

The best and noblest part of his creation, the twice begotten, the immortals that shall be the bodyguard of his Son, that shall stand about his bed, which is Solomon's, each man with his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night. What a privilege it is to be begotten of God, to be the "firstfruits" of his creatures!

**19.** *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear,*

Because it is by the Word that we are begotten: let us be swift to hear it. "Slow to speak," because there is so much sin in us that the less we speak the better. In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin. Great talkativeness is seldom dissociated from great sinfulness. "Slow to wrath."

**20.** *Slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

There is a tendency to grow angry with those who do not see the truth; but is it not a foolish thing to be angry with blind men because they do not see? What if you see yourself? Who opened your eyes?

Give God the promise for what you see, and never think that your anger, your indignation, your hot temper, can ever work the righteousness of God. It is contrary thereto, and cannot work towards it.

**21-23.** *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:*

It is a good thing for him to do that, to see himself as others see him. "Beholding his natural face," even as men in looking into the Word of God, behold the face of their nature; they see what they are like as they look into the glass.

**24-26.** *For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*

## **JAMES 4**

### **1.** *From whence come wars and fightings among you?*

Whether between nations, or parties or individuals,-if there be wars and fightings, whence do they come?

#### **1.** *Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?*

Do they not arise from one desiring something, and another desiring the same thing? Is there not a competition or emulation of an evil kind, in which each one prefers himself, and seeks not the good of his neighbor?

#### **2.** *Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not,-*

This is nature's way of trying to get by contention what it desires to possess,-fighting, and warring, and killing, yet the result of all this is nil. After all is done, "yet ye have not." There is a

simpler and a surer way which men forget; they leave that divine path untrodden: "Ye have not,"

**2. *Because ye ask not.***

With all your efforts you do not succeed, because you omit to pray to God. Prayer would have brought you every blessing that you need; but, instead of going to God, and asking at his hands, you rush upon your neighbor, and seek to take what you desire as spoil from him.

Perhaps some say, "But we do ask." "Well, then," saith the apostle,--

**3. *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.***

The lusts of the flesh come in, and put us upon the wrong track; or if we take the right road, yet, if the lusts be there, God will not bless us because, in doing so, he would be helping us to gratify our lusts.

**4. *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?***

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

**4. *Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.***

In one sense, Christians are the greatest friends of the world, for they desire the good of all men, and seek their salvation. But, in another sense, viewing the world as a great conglomerate of evil, we are no friends of the world. There is a certain form of theology, popular nowadays, which teaches us that we ought to remove the line of demarcation between the Church and the world. This kind of teaching may be called theology, but it cometh not of God; it is a

gross falsehood which we ought to abhor in the very depth of our spirit.

**5, 6.** *Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace.*

There is a spirit, resident in the natural man, the human nature of man, which is always inclined toward hate and envy, always wanting to get somewhat from other men, and always grieved if other men seem to be or to have more than the person himself has. How is this spirit to be met? This verse supplies the answer, "He giveth more grace." "More grace," -this is the great remedy for hate and envy. "More grace,"-this is the balm for sorrow. "More grace,"-this is our greatest help out of all difficulties. "More grace,"-this is the universal recipe for all that we need: "He giveth more grace."

**6, 7.** *Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God.*

Lay aside that fighting spirit,-that effort to pull others down so as to raise yourself up,-and bow before God, yield yourself wholly to his blessed will. This is the way of peace, and the way of joy, too.

**7.** *Resist the devil,-*

Who will seek to stir you up to rebellion; give no place to him: "Resist the devil,"-

**7, 8.** *And he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.*

Hear this command, and practice it; get near to God in Christ Jesus, and you shall soon find him come to your help in every hour of need.

**8.** *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*

For, if you are double-minded, your hands and your hearts must both need to be cleansed. The apostle does not say, "Concentrate your thoughts," but he does say, "Cleanse your hearts;" for, to have two objects in life, is a kind of spiritual adultery, from which we need to be purged, so the command is, "Purify your hearts, ye double-minded."

**9.** *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.*

If the previous verses have rightly accused you of sin, confess your guilt with shame and sorrow, and so come to Christ imploring pardon.

**10.** *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

If you exalt yourself, he will pull you down. If you lie down in the dust before him, he will lift you up. It is according to God's usual way of acting to practice these reversals. Mary truly sang, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away."

**11.** *Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.*

If you cease to think that which is evil, you will also cease to speak evil. If I speak evil of my brother, I have condemned the law which bids me love him as I love myself; I have practically said that it is an absurd law, and an unrighteous law; and this is a great evil in God's sight.

**12-15.** *There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.*

We are all too apt to say what we will do, and where we will go, forgetting to add, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

**16, 17.** *But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

There are sins of omission as well as sins of commission; may the Lord graciously keep us from both forms of the evil, for his dear Son's sake! Amen





# 1 PETER

## 1 PETER 1

**1, 2.** *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

So may it be to all of you who are gathered here; grace first, and peace next; but may both grace and peace be multiplied unto you! Much grace, and much peace, may you have, brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus!

**3-5.** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Oh, what a blessed hope this is, — that, though we fall asleep, we shall surely wake again; and when we awaken, it will be in the likeness of the great Head of the family, and we ourselves shall be heirs of an inheritance in which there will be no sin and no corruption. That inheritance is kept for us, and we are kept for it; so the double keeping makes it doubly sure. Happy are the people to whom these verses apply.

**6.** *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*

It is possible, in Christian experience, for a man to rejoice greatly and yet to be in heaviness. No man can explain this paradox to his fellow, yet he understands it himself. “In heaviness through manifold trials,” yet greatly rejoicing in the full conviction that they will soon be over, and that then we shall enter into unutterable joy. Be of good courage, then, you who are now depressed, you who are in heaviness; “lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.” The fiery furnace is very hot; but the Son of man is in it with

you; and, by his grace, you shall come out of the furnace before long.

**7, 8.** *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love;*

Ah! love can embrace him whom the eyes cannot see, and the hands cannot hold.

**8-10.** *In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:*

I have heard of some divines who will never read, and never study, because they have such an abundant measure of the Spirit of God that they can talk any quantity of nonsense extemporaneously! But it was not so with the prophets. They had very much of the Spirit of God; yet, for all that, they were most diligent students. They “enquired and searched diligently,” —even those prophets “who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.” I have a very grave suspicion of that so-called “inspiration” which enables a man to preach without study. If there were such a thing, it would be a premium upon laziness; and I feel sure that the Spirit of God would never countenance such a thing as that.

**11, 12.** *Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;*

The prophets lived for us; they were inspired for us; and the benefits of their holy lives and gracious words are for us upon whom the ends of the earth have come.

**12.** *Which things the angels desire to look into.*

They, as well as the prophets, are deep students of the unsearchable mysteries of Christ.

**13.** *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, —*

Pull yourself together; be not mentally and spiritually in dishabille; but, be girt ready for holy running or sober wrestling: “Gird up the loins of your mind,”

**13-17.** *Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:*

In holy fear; — not in servile, slavish fear, but in a blessed state of sacred timidity and awe lest you should offend your God and Saviour.

**18-25.** *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.*

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 PETER 1, AND 5:1-9.

## **1 PETER 1**

**1.** *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, —*

It must have been very pleasant to his heart to write those words, — not “Peter, who denied his Master,” not Peter, “full of

imperfections and infirmities, the impetuous and changeable one of the twelve;” but “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,” as truly sent of God as any of the other apostles, and with as much of the Spirit of his Master resting upon him: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,” —

**1, 2.** *To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,-*

You might go for fifty years to some places of worship, and never hear the word “elect” even mentioned. Modern ministers seem to be ashamed of the grand old doctrine of election; but it was not so with the apostles and the early Christians, they were accustomed to speak of one another as the elect of God. The doctrine of election was most precious to their hearts, and therefore Peter writes: “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,” —

**2.** *Through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

We not only need grace, but we need much grace, and also peace, and we need a greatly increased measure of both those blessings. Do not be satisfied, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, with the grace that you already have. Be thankful for it, but ask for the divine multiplication of it; regard the grace which you have already received as being like the boy’s loaves and fishes, and expect that Christ will continue to multiply it for you and for thousands of others round about you: “Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

**3-5.** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

What a vast mass of meaning is packed away in these words! Men’s books, even when they are good, are like gold-leaf; a little precious metal is very thinly hammered out so as to cover a wide surface, but almost every word in the Bible seems to contain a whole mine of heavenly wealth.

Note, beloved, what Peter says concerning your new birth; you are begotten by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. At your first birth, you were born in sin; but now you have been born again, through grace, by the almighty power of God. Notice, also, unto what you are born, — unto a hope that is full of life, a lively hope, a hope of immortality a hope whose root is in the grave of Christ, the empty grave from which he has risen, and which is the assurance that because he has risen, you also shall rise. See, further, to what you have been born: “to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” See, also, how that inheritance is entailed upon you, for it is “reserved in heaven for you;” and see, too, how you are kept for it, for you “are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

**6.** *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*

What! can there be rejoicing and heaviness in the same heart at the same time? Oh, yes! our experience has taught us that we can be at the same moment, in heaviness of heart and yet rejoicing in the Lord.

**7-9.** *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.*

You have that already if you have believed in Jesus, you have received; a present, immediate salvation. There are some who do not understand or realize this, they miss the whole joy of our holy religion. They are always hoping to be saved by-and-by; but those who are in Christ Jesus by a living personal faith receive here and now the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

**10-12.** *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have*

*preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*

Observe, dear brethren, that the prophets did not speak without due consideration, but they “enquired and searched diligently” into the meaning of that salvation of which they “testified beforehand.” Holy Scripture must not be read by us carelessly. We ought to peer, and pry, and search into it to get at its hidden meaning, and the prophecies as well as the rest of the Word are to be searched into by us upon whom the ends of the earth have come. Observe, also, that this divine revelation is of great interest to the holy angels before the throne of God; they stand gazing down as if they were trying to understand the wondrous mystery of redemption, and the great and glorious gospel of the grace of God.

**13-16.** *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

Be not only moral, upright, truthful, and so forth; but “be ye holy.” That is a very high attainment: “Be ye holy;” and observe the reason for obedience to the command: “for I am holy.” Children should be like their fathers, there are many children who bear, in their very faces, evidence, of their sonship; you know who their fathers were by the image that the children bear. Oh, that it were always so with all the children of God: “Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

**17.** *And if ye call on the father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: —*

You are only here for a while, you are sojourners, foreigners, pilgrims passing through a country where you have no abiding place; be therefore careful and even fearful lest you should become like the people among whom you dwell, have a holy dread of the contaminations of sin: “Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:” —

**18-21.** *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood*

*of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.*

Jesus Christ, from the dead, and this is our joy today. This is one of the facts, which are proved beyond all question, that Jesus Christ, who died upon the cross, and was buried in Joseph's tomb, did actually rise again. This is the corner-stone of the Christian faith; one of the great facts upon which we found our confidence as to salvation by Jesus Christ.

**22, 23.** *Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

God's Word never dies, God's Word never changes. There are some who think we ought to get a new gospel every few years or even every few weeks, but that was not Peter's notion. He wrote, and he was divinely inspired to write, concerning "the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

**24, 25.** *For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

## **1 PETER 1:1-12**

**1, 2.** *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

How sweetly the apostle is obeying his Master's command, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." This is the same Peter who once began to sink beneath the waves, yet now he is helping others to stand. This is the very Peter who denied his master, but he begins his Epistle by owning himself to be "an

apostle of Jesus Christ.” What wonders the Lord Jesus had wrought for Peter by his grace! It is no marvel, therefore, that he should say to others, “Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

**3.** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,—*

And, truly, this is a blessing, beyond all comparison or imagination, that we have been begotten again by the Divine Father unto a “living” hope, for that is a better rendering than “lively.” Our first birth brought us into sin and sorrow, but our second birth brings us into purity and joy. We were born to die; now are we born never to die, “begotten again” unto a life that shall remain in us for evermore, a life which shall even penetrate these mortal bodies, and make them immortal, “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

**4, 5.** *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Joy, my brethren, in the glorious inheritance which is prepared for you, unstained, uncorrupted, perfectly pure, and therefore to last for ever, because the elements which produce decay are not in it. It is without sin, and therefore it shall be without end. What a mercy it is to be “kept by the power of God”! See, heaven is kept for us, and we are kept for heaven; heaven is prepared for us, and we are prepared for heaven. There is a double action of God’s grace thus working in us, and working for us, unto bliss eternal.

**6.** *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*

Or, “trials.” Some people cannot comprehend how a man can greatly rejoice, and yet be in heaviness at the same time; but there are many things, in a Christian’s experience, that cannot be understood except by those who experience them; and even they God many a mystery which can only be expressed by a paradox. There are some who think that God’s people should never be heavy in spirit; but the apostle says, “Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness.” He does not say, “If need be, ye are in manifold trials;” but, “If need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials,”

for the “needs be” is as much for the depressed spirit as for the trials themselves.

**7, 8.** *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*

And does not the joy agree well with the object of it? Paul said, “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift;” and Peter, speaking of the same Saviour, says, “In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

**9-11.** *Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*

Do you wonder if, sometimes, you find in the Bible a truth which you cannot quite comprehend? You ought not to marvel, for even the prophets, who prophesied of the grace which has come to us, did not always fully understand their own messages. I am sure that their inspiration was verbal, because the inspired men frequently did not themselves know the meaning of what they were moved to write.

**12.** *Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*

See the kind of preaching that we should all desire to hear, and that all God’s ministers should aim at: “them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” Nothing but a gospel full of the energy of the Holy Ghost, and set on fire by him, can effect the eternal purposes of God; but this is the kind of preaching that will live, and that will also make men live. God send it to every church and congregation throughout the world! Amen.

## **1 PETER 1:1-16**

**1, 2.** *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

The first Christians were not so afraid of the doctrine of election as some are now-a-days. Peter was not ashamed to address the saints as the elect of God, for so, indeed, they are, if they be saints at all. It is he that chose them, not because they were sanctified, but that they might be sanctified — chose them to eternal life through sanctification. Oh! happy are they who by grace have made their calling and election sure, and now ascribe all the glory of their salvation to the sovereign choice of God. “Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.”

**3-5.** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.*

How full of grace every sentence is. He blesses God because God has so freely blest us; and he abounds in thanksgiving because he sees that abundant mercy, by which believers have been begotten again — born again — made, therefore, children after a new sort, and so made heirs of an inheritance very different from that upon which we enter by nature “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” Brethren and sisters, if you have, indeed, been born by divine grace, to what estates are you born — to what high dignities and saved privileges! Rejoice and bless the Lord. But, perhaps, the dark fear crossed your mind that, perhaps, after all, you may perish and miss the inheritance. Now, notice the double consolation of a double keeping. The inheritance is kept. It is reserved in heaven for you, and you are kept, too. It is kept for you, and you are kept for it, “For you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.”

**6.** *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.*

This is your life. This is like a rainbow made up of the drops of earth's sorrow in the beams of heaven's love a happy combination, after all.

*7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

Gilt looks very much like gold but it will not stand the fire. It curls and disappears. Oh! to be solid gold through and through. If so, you need not mind the trials of today, since they will only prepare you for the glories eternal at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

**8-10.** *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:*

Prophets knew about you. They did not taste of the grace you know, but through the vista of the future they foresaw it, and they almost envied you in this gospel dispensation that you should live in so clear a light, and should be fed upon such rare mercies. Oh! what prophets and kings longed for, do not let us despise, and we shall despise these mercies if we do not make the most of them by entering into the fullness of the joy which they are meant to bring to us. These prophets searched diligently.

**11-12.** *Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*

See you not your privilege, then? You have what prophets had not. You enjoy what angels desire to see. They cannot enjoy what you do. Rightly does our hymn put it: — “Never did angels taste above Redeeming grace and dying love.” And you have, this very day.

**13.** *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind,*

Be ready to depart to your inheritance. Do not let your garments flow carelessly and loosely, as though you had no journey before you, but “gird up the loins of your mind.”

**13.** *Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

That is a very blessed subject. There is a grace that was brought to you when Christ first came. There is another grace and a higher grace that is to be brought to you when Christ shall come the second time. Until that second coming of Christ, the church on earth and in heaven cannot be perfected. The bodies of the saints wait in the grave till he comes to give them resurrection.

“O long expected day, begin!

Dawn on these realms of woe and sin.”

For we wait for thy appearing, O Christ.

**14-16.** *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

See your model. See the copy to which you are to write. You are far short of it. Try again. May the power of Jesus rest upon you, and may he that hath wrought us to the self-same thing to which we have attained continue to work in us till we are like our Lord himself!

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 PETER 1:1-16 AND MATTHEW 10:37-40.

## **1 PETER 1:13-25**

**13.** *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

This is Peter’s practical application of the great truths of which he had been writing. “Look ahead, and expect great things. Live in the future. Project your thoughts beyond the centuries that are passing away into the ages which will never die.”

**14, 15.** *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;*

Remember that you can never be really whole till you are holy, for holiness is spiritual sanity; it is the curing of the mind and heart from the disease which sin brought upon them.

**16.** *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

Children of God, be like your Father; prove that you are his true children by manifesting his character. Let his lineaments be seen in your countenance: "Be ye holy; for I am holy." The Revised Version is, "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy."

**17.** *And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:*

Be not presumptuous. Ever remember that, as there is a God who is to judge every man, you are to be judged; and oh, that you might, through his grace, be in such a condition of heart that you shall stand the last test, and be found to be full weight when you are put into the balances of the sanctuary which God shall hold with steadfast hand!

**18, 19.** *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:*

You have seen the character of your Father who is in heaven; this should urge and help you to be like him, holy. Now you see the character of your Redeemer, "a lamb without blemish and without spot." Let this influence you to be holy, too.

**20, 21.** *Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.*

It is no use to place them anywhere else. All other vessels are too frail to bear such a heavy burden; but, if your faith and hope are in God, then you have a security which none can destroy.

**22-25.** *Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the*

*glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

Blessed be God for an everlasting gospel, founded on the everlasting covenant, which bringeth with it everlasting life to all those who believe in Christ Jesus the Lord.

### **1 PETER 1:17-25**

*17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:*

Not in unbelieving fear, but in that holy carefulness which watches against sin of every kind lest in any way you should spoil your holy work for God.

*18, 19. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:*

As your redemption cost so much, prize it highly, and do not go back to the sin from which you have been so dearly redeemed. Fear lest you should do so. Remember that heredity has a great power over you; the traditions of your fathers will imperceptibly draw you back unless you watch against them. But you have been so gloriously redeemed with the very blood of Christ's heart that you must not draw back.

*20, 21. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.*

Whenever you think of the glory of your risen Lord, remember what your redemption cost him, and quit all dead works, lay aside the grave-clothes of care and anxiety, and live in newness of life as those who have been redeemed by the risen Saviour.

*22, 23. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, -*

See how this love of the brethren is linked on to regeneration. The first time we are born, we are born in sin, and that tends to hate, but when we are born again, born unto God, our life tends to love. "Being born again,"-

**23.** *Not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

Peter reminds us, in the 18<sup>th</sup> verse, that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with incorruptible; and he here reminds us that we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible." Everything about a Christian means his deliverance from corruption, and the bringing of him into a state of immortality and incorruption.

**24, 25.** *For all flesh is as grass; and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.*

Everything earthly is corruptible; that which is merely natural has its season of decay, but the children of God have the Word of the Lord abiding in them, and that never dies; it has no autumn or winter.

**25.** *And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 PETER 1:17-25; AND 2:1-12.

## **1 PETER 2**

**1-3.** *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

When the apostle describes us under the character of "newborn babes," he would have us lay aside all that is inconsistent with that character. Newborn children have no malice; they have no guile or craftiness; they have no hypocrisies, nor envies, nor evil speakings. They are clear from all these evils; would God we were as clear as they are! It would be better to be infants, not speaking at all, than to be among those who speak evil. It would be better to begin life over again than to live long enough to have gained a treasure of malice, and a hoard of cunning, and to have learned the tricks of hypocrisy. Let us be as simple as little children, as guileless, as harmless, as

free from anything like unkindness as newborn babes are. And inasmuch as we are to follow them in what they have not, let us also imitate them in what they have. Let us desire ardently, as for our very life, the unadulterated milk of the Word. Let us cultivate that combination of hunger and thirst which is found in a little child, that we may hunger and thirst thus after God's Word. We have done more than taste the Word; we have tasted that the Lord himself is gracious. Let us long to feast more and more upon this divine food, that we may grow thereby.

4. *To whom coming,-*

That is, to the Lord. We are always to be coming unto him. We began our spiritual life by coming to Jesus, and we are to continue coming unto him: "To whom coming,"-

4. *As unto a living stone,*

We are to settle down on him as the stones of a building settle down upon the foundation: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone,"-

4. *Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,*

Christ always was disallowed of men, and he always will be, until the great consummation of all things. Some disown him in one way, some in another. Some boldly blaspheme him with something like honesty; others pretend to be his ministers, yet all the while are undermining the gospel which he lived and died to preach. It matters little that Christ is "disallowed indeed of men," for he is "chosen of God, and precious."

5. *Ye also, as lively stones,-*

Or, living stones

5. *Are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

You might have noticed, in reading the New Testament, that you never find the officers of a church called priests. Whenever that term is used by way of illustration, it is applied to all the people of God. They are all priests but, under the Christian dispensation, there is no set of men who have any right to take that title above their fellow-believers. All those who believe in Jesus Christ are priests, every one of them as much as all the others; and the assumption of priesthood under the Christian dispensation is most truly the

repetition of the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abirain, though the men who commit it usually try to lay the guilt of that sin at the doors of other people. We ministers are no more priests than all of you who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are; we shake our skirts at the very thought of such wickedness; and cry, "God for bid that we should, with unhallowed hands, try to steal away from God's people what is the right and prerogative of them all!" "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

**6.** *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.*

Put all your trust in Jesus, for you will never have cause to regret doing so. The text, in the Old Testament, from which Peter quoted, says, "He that believeth shall not make haste;" he shall not need to be in a hurry, he shall enjoy the holy leisure which springs from a quiet confidence where confidence ought to be placed. O beloved, stay yourselves on Christ! Rest your whole weight on him, for then, "you shall not be confounded."

**7.** *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious:*

"He is an honour,-he is your honour, your glory, your boast." It is an honourable thing to be a believer in a Lord so glorious as he is, in a gospel so reasonable as his gospel is, in promises so certain of fulfillment as his promises are, in an atonement so effectual as his atonement is, and in a Master so omnipotent as he is: "Unto you therefore which believe he is an honour:"

**7, 8.** *But unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*

This is the distinguishing mark between God's chosen people and the rest of mankind. His elect receive Christ, and rejoice in him; but as for the ungodly, they willfully reject the Saviour, and so he becomes to them "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." Christ is the great touchstone of humanity; by contact with him, the precious are discovered, and the vile are discerned,

**9, 10.** *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people,*

Who were you, and what were your ancestors when the apostle wrote these words? Our forefathers were, in Peter's day, uncivilized and barbarous tribes at the utmost end of Rome's dominions. We "were not a people,"-

**10, 11.** *But are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you us strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;-*

If you are priests,-as you are if you are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ,-take care that you are clean before God. Let no impurity stain your body, for sin committed by the body grievously befouls the spirit, and defiles the heart: "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"-

**12.** *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers,-*

As they are sure to do, for none are so certain to be slandered as the pure; and the more clean you are in God's sight, the more will you excite the animosity of ungodly men, and they will show it by slandering you: "that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers,"-

**12-14.** *They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.*

True Christians give no trouble in the State. They are not law-breakers, but they strive to do that which is honest and upright. Where the laws are not righteous, they may cause trouble to bad law-givers and lawmakers; but when rulers ordain that which is just and righteous, they find that Christians are their best subjects.

**15, 16.** *For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free,-*

What a grand word that is, "as free"! Byron wrote, "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free, And all are slaves besides." But

we may alter that, and say, "He is the true freeman whom his Lord makes free." "As free,-

**16, 17.** *And not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.*

A great deal of stress is sometimes laid upon that last precept, and I would lay just as much emphasis upon it as the Scripture does; but recollect the earlier command also: "Honour all men." "A man's a man for that." Whatever his condition may be, honour the manhood that is in him. Do not despise him because he is poor, or because his coat is not so fashionably cut as yours is; for, perhaps, he may be a better man than you are: "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

**18-25.** *Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

## **1 PETER 2**

**1-3.** *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

If you have once had that sweet taste in your mouths, you will wish to have it always there, and you may do so if you continue to

drink the unadulterated milk of the Word, and do not sour that good milk through tempests of malice, and envy, and evil speaking.

**4.** *To whom coming,-*

We should be always coming to Christ; we have come to him, and we are coming to him, and we will keep on coming to him: "To whom coming,"-

**4.** *As unto a living stone,-*

Sinking down, settling, resting on that stone,-always pressing closely upon Christ: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone,"-

**4, 5.** *Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

All of you, who are in Christ Jesus, are the living stones in this spiritual temple; and you are also priests, who offer up spiritual sacrifices. You need no material temple, for you are yourselves the temple. You need no other priest save the great High Priest who has gone into the heavenly, for you are yourselves priests unto the Most High God.

**6-8.** *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient:whereunto also they were appointed.*

God grant that we may not be found among that unholy company, who, rejecting Christ as a foundation, stumble over him, and, in consequence, find themselves broken to pieces.

**9.** *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:*

Oh, the dignity which Christ has put upon the meanest believer! What a high office, and, consequently, what a solemn responsibility is ours!

**10.** *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

Look back to what you were before your conversion. Whenever you are tempted to be proud of your present standing, remember the horrible pit and the miry clay out of which sovereign grace alone has plucked you. When you are on the throne, recollect the dungeon from which the grace of God uplifted you. When you are in full possession of your spiritual faculties, and are rejoicing in the Lord, do not forget the time when you lay sick, even unto death, until the Great Physician passed that way, and healed you.

**11-17.** *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men.*

Honour even the poorest of men. Remember that they are men. Even though they are sunken in vice or crime, honour the manhood that is in them, however much you may detest their crimes. "Honour all men."

**17-20.** *Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*

This is a correction of what we often hear a slandered person say. "So-and-so has been spreading an evil report against me, and I am in bad odour. I should not have minded it if it had been true, but I cannot bear the slander as it is false." My dear friend, you ought

not to mind it if it is not true; but “when ye do well, and suffer for it,” there is then an acceptableness with God if ye take it patiently.

**21-25.** *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

The Lord make this true of all of us, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

## **1 PETER 2**

**1.** *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,*

Putting these evil things right away from you, having nothing further to do with any of them. Notice the repetition of the word “all.” “All malice, and all guile,” — everything in the shape of deceit, — “and all evil speakings.” All these are to be put away by all believers, as rags are put away in the rag-bucket, or refuse on the dunghill.

**2.** *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

Be glad to get simple truth, the “milk of the Word.” Even if you can digest the strong meat of the Word, never grow weary of the milk, for it is always good diet even for a full-grown man in Christ. Do not crave milk and water, but “desire the unadulterated milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby.” It is not enough for you to be spiritually alive, you must grow; and especially while you are babes in grace, your great desire should be that you may grow.

**3.** *If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

You begin with tasting that the Lord is gracious, you go on to desire the unadulterated milk of the Word, and so you grow in grace more and more.

**4.** *To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,*

No one figure is sufficient to set forth Christ as he really is. A stone is a Scriptural simile and symbol of Christ, but we have to make the metaphor somewhat incongruous by comparing him to “a living stone.”

**5. *Ye also, as lively stones,* —**

It is not “lively” stones, it is the same word, in the original, in both cases, — “a living stone” and “living stones.” The translators of our Authorized Version have often rendered the same Hebrew or Greek word in a different way, which is a pity, as it is in this instance: “Ye also, as living stones,” —

**5. *are built up a spiritual house,* —**

A house that is a living structure from the foundation to the topstone.

**5. *An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.***

He is a living stone, and you, as living stones, are built upon him, and he and you together make up a living spiritual house, and in order that the house may have suitable tenants, and be properly furnished, you also become priests, and, as priests, you “offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

**6. *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.***

Thus the apostle quotes from the prophet Isaiah the ancient prophecy concerning Christ.

**7. *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,***

Here Peter quotes from Psalm 118. What reverence these inspired men had for the inspired Book! The Spirit of God could have spoken fresh words if he had pleased, but, as if he meant to honour above everything else the Book which he had himself inspired, he “moved” Peter to quote the ancient prophet and psalmist in confirmation of what he was writing.

**8. *And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.***

These are terrible words, but they are true. I cannot fully explain them. As Archbishop Leighton says, "It is easier to get into a depth over this awful truth than it is to get out again." O God; grant that none of us may stumble at Christ! If we do, Christ will not move because we kick at him, or fall over him.

**9.** *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;*

These are wonderful epithets that are here heaped upon believers. May we have the grace to be able to appropriate them, and to expound them in our lives!

**9.** *That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

See where you once were, and see also to what you have been called by God's grace: "out of darkness into light." That is not all: into His light. Even that is not all: "into his marvellous light." The light of the gospel is full of wonders. As common light is made up of many colors, so the light of God's grace is made up of many marvellous colors, — the colors of all the attributes of God.

**10.** *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

What a great change conversion is! And how great a change conversion Works! How wonderful is the effect of regeneration! We had not obtained mercy, but now we have obtained mercy; we were not a people, but now we are the people of God.

**11.** *Dearly beloved, I beseech you —*

Peter puts his hands together, and pleads with intense earnestness.

**11.** *As strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*

Those fleshly lusts belong to this present evil world, but you do not belong to it; you are "strangers and pilgrims" here, therefore feel an absolute alienation towards such things, an utter abhorrence of them. Do not even think of them, much less practice them. "Abstain from fleshly lusts;" for, while they injure the body, that is not the worst thing that they do, for they "war against the soul."

**12, 13.** *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good*

*works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake:*

You are not to be disturbers of the peace; you Christian people are to cultivate the spirit of conciliation wherever you dwell, submitting yourselves, "for the Lord's sake," even to some things which you do not like.

**13.** *Whether it be to the king, as supreme;*

In Peter's day, the king was a poor creature, and something worse than that. Indeed, I might say of the bulk of the Emperors of Rome, who were the chief "kings" of that day, that they were monsters of iniquity; yet the office was to be respected even when the man who occupied it could not be; much more should it be respected when the occupant is what a true "king" should be.

**14-16.** *Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, —*

Free in yourselves, free in your conscience, free in your mind and heart.

**16.** *And not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.*

You possess a freedom which others claim, but do not know. You feel that you are no man's slave, yet you do not use your liberty for evil, or to the injury of others.

**17-19.** *Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.*

There is no credit in suffering rightfully; the credit is in patiently enduring suffering, which you do not deserve.

**20-21.** *For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called:*

It is part of a true Christian's calling to bear what is put upon him wrongfully.

**21-23.** *Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*

This leads Peter to make the following glorious declaration concerning the stunning sacrifice of Christ.

**24.** *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, —*

There was a transference of sin from sinners to Christ. This is no fiction. He, “his own self,” bore that sin “in his own body on the tree,” —

**24.** *That we, being dead to sins, —*

Because he died for us, and we died in him, —

**24.** *Should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

By his sufferings, you were cured of sin. His death not only removed from you the penalty of sin; but what is far better, it also removed from you the dread disease itself.

**25.** *For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

God grant that this may be true concerning every one of us, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

## **1 PETER 2**

**1.** *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,-*

This is what we are to lay aside, to put away from us, to banish altogether. These are the old garments of the flesh which we are to give up to the moths that they may devour them, and leave not a fragment of the old rags for us to wear. “Laying aside all malice.” Has anybody injured you? Are you angry with him because of what he has done to you? Thou freely forgive the injury, and wholly forget it. “and all guile.” That is, everything that is of the nature of craftiness and deception. Be honest, simple, straightforward, transparent; this is a trait of character which well becomes all Christians. “And hypocrisies” of all sorts. Let us not profess to be what we are not, nor pretend to know what we do not know, or talk of experiences which we have never felt; in fact, let us never be

hypocrites in any respect whatsoever. The God of truth loves his children to be the embodiments of truth. Hypocrisy he hates with a perfect hatred. "And envies." We must lay them all aside, all envies of men because they are richer, or more gifted, or more highly esteemed than we are. Let us not envy anybody, for envy eats a man's own heart out and slays him, as Eliphaz said to Job "Envy slayeth the silly one." "And all evil speakings." We are not to be the repeaters of stories to the discredit of others, or to make up or to exaggerate any evil reports concerning anything in their lives. Let us have nothing to do with "evil speakings" of any kind. Lay all these rags aside. Is any one of them still clinging to you? Let it be laid aside this very hour.

*2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

The unadulterated "milk of the Word" is the best food for those who are, spiritually, "newborn babes." Desire this unadulterated milk of the Word not out of an idle curiosity, -but that you may grow thereby, that you may grow wiser, holier, more earnest, more like your Saviour, -that you may grow up into the likeness of Him whose you are, and whom you serve.

*3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

If you have spiritually tasted this great truth, you have the flavour of it upon your palate, so that it makes you long for more of it.

*4. To whom coming, -*

That is, unto the Lord; and that name Peter evidently gives to Jesus Christ, and therefore we worship him, and call him, each one for himself or herself, even as Thomas did, "My Lord and my God." "To whom coming," —

*5. As unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,*

"Chosen of God." The whole spiritual building is the result of the election, the choice of God. Jesus Christ, the great foundation and the chief corner stone, is chosen of God, and all the living stones that are built upon him are also chosen of God. The whole fabric is like the foundation upon which it is laid: "Chosen of God, and precious," — precious to God and precious to us.

*5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

We hear of certain persons being “ordained” first deacons and then priests, but all who are truly in Christ, whether they are men, or women, or children, are priests. We are “a holy priesthood” if we are in Christ. All the sacrifices that can now be offered are spiritual sacrifices, which are to be offered, not by a few special persons set apart for that work, but by the whole company of God’s chosen people, and so they are “acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

*6. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.*

Those who believe on him are built upon him; they rest upon him, they are cemented to him; and being living stones they grow into him, and he grows into them; they participate in his life, and so the living temple becomes one, the chosen men and women who are the spiritual temple in which God dwells upon earth. We need not wonder if, like the chief corner stone, we are disallowed of men, but we may rejoice that, like our Lord and Saviour, we are “chosen of God, and precious.”

*7. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: He is preciousness, he is an honour, he is everything that is glorious to you.*

You can never think highly enough of him, or speak well enough concerning him. All the world beside may disallow him, but unto you he is precious.

*7, 8. But unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient whereunto also they were appointed.*

The ungodly reject him, and regard him as of no account; but God has made him “the head of the corner.” And he has done more than that, he has made him “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence” to them, “even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.” That is a terrible truth upon which I am not going to speak just now, but I want you

specially to note what an awful thing it is for men to “stumble at the Word,” — to givest themselves upon Christ’s cross, — to turn the heavenly medicine into poison,-to make Christ himself, who is to others “the savour of life unto life,” to be to them “the savour of death unto death.” “Being disobedient.” The fault lies with themselves, they willfully disobey the command to believe on Christ. “Whereunto also they were appointed.” So the divine purpose is accomplished, although the guilt and punishment of their disobedience rest upon themselves alone.

**9. *But ye are a chosen generation,-***

There is the contrast between the disobedient and all true believers. “Ye” have the chosen Saviour to be the chief corner-stone, upon whom “ye” who are living stones are to be built up into “a spiritual house,” which is to be the abiding place of the Most High God.

**9. *A royal priesthood,-***

“Ye” are to be like Melchisedec, in whom the two offices of priest and king were combined in one person. More than that, “ye” are to be like your Lord, in respect to his royal priesthood. That he should have “loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father,” seems to be an honour which is far too high for us. It appears to bring us almost too near our Lord, yet it is not So, for Peter wrote, under divine inspiration, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,” —

**9. *An holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:***

God’s grace has been bestowed upon you in order that you may show forth his praises, or, as the marginal reading puts it, his “virtues.” Note what the Lord has done for you he has called you “out of darkness” into light, into his light, “into this marvelous light.” There are three thoughts there that are beautifully blended into one. What marvelous light that is into which God calls us! Try to measure it by the darkness in which you were; try to measure it by the deeper darkness into which you were going; try to measure it by the eternal darkness which would have fallen upon you if you

had died in the dark. God has graciously brought you into his marvelous light.

**10.** *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

How the apostle delights to set forth these contrasts between the past and the present of the Lord's chosen people! By remembering what we were, we are made to appreciate and enjoy more what we now are. We may well praise him who has wrought this wondrous change in us. We were not his people, we were sinners of the Gentiles, not the chosen Hebrew race. In times past, we were not worthy to be called a people, but we are now the people of God. We had not obtained mercy, we had not even asked for it; some of us were so blinded by our self-righteousness that we did not know that we needed God's mercy, or did not want it; but now we have obtained mercy.

**11.** *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;-*

Fleshly lusts always hurt the soul. They do serious injury to the body, for they are contrary to the laws of health; but the main point for you to consider is that they "war against the soul." No men or women can ever commit an act of uncleanness of the body without grievously injuring the soul. It leaves a weakness, a defilement, a wound, a scar upon the soul; so may God graciously keep us from it altogether!

**12.** *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers,-*

This they are sure to do, and the more holy your life is, the more they will probably speak against you. Even if you could live like an angel, some would call you a devil, but you are not to be judged by men's judgment, thank God for that, and so live, "that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers," —

**12,13.** *They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake:" —*

We are to obey kings, and governors, and magistrates, even when they may not be all that we wish them to be: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake:" —

**13-15.** *Whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:*

Ignorance, you see, is a noisy thing. An empty drum makes a loud noise when it is beaten; and empty men, like empty vessels, often make the most sound. How then are we to silence this noisy ignorance? By argument? No, for it is not amenable to argument. Ignorance is to be silenced “by well doing.” Holy living is the best reply to infidel talking.

**16.** *As free,-*

For there are no others under heaven so free as God’s servants are: “As free,” —

**16.** *And not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.*

Not talking about liberty in order to stab at order; not prating about liberty with the design of enriching yourself by robbing someone else. That is not God’s will, but “using your liberty... . as the servants of God” should use it.

**17.** *Honour all men.*

Whoever they may be, be courteous, respectful, kind to all men, because they are men. Whatever their circumstances, they are men, therefore “honour all men.”

**17-19.** *Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.*

Not always “sticking up for his rights,” as an ungodly man says, but feeling that the greatest right in the world is the right to do without your rights. To suffer wrongfully, will often glorify God much better than to stand up for what you have a right to be or to have.

**20.** *For what glory is it, if, when ye are buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*

It may be hard to bear, but in that very hardness lies much of the fragrance of it towards God. As spices must be bruised, so must you

be pressed and crushed to bring out your sweetness. If you want to be where there is nothing to suffer, and no wrong to be endured, you are in the wrong world for that as yet; that will be in the world to come.

**21.** *For even hereunto were ye called-*

Called to do right, and to suffer for it! Ah me, what a call is that!

**21-23.** *Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; and when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

## **1 PETER 2**

**1, 2.** *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: Have we not constantly declared that our faith, if true, is always practical?*

Here, again, we have the precepts of God's Word. Here we are told that there is much for us to lay aside, as if it were natural to us in every case, and must, therefore, be carefully laid aside. "Malice" — we are all inclined to return evil for evil: the Christian must not do so. "All guile" — everything like craft and cunning — this is unbecoming in a Christian. "Hypocrisy" — seeming to be what we are not; all sorts of mere seeming we must lay aside. "And envy" — how easy it is for us to envy one man his wealth, or another his health, or another his talents; but "all envy" the Christian must have done with. "And evil speaking" — it is painful to reflect how much of evil speaking there is among persons who we still hope are good people. They are very fond of repeating stories to the disadvantage of their fellow-Christians. Now, whether you are the author of it or not, do not be the retailer of it, for we are told here to lay aside all evil speaking. But then the religion of Jesus Christ does not consist

in negatives: it is not merely what we are to lay aside; there is something to be taken up. We are told that as we are born again we are to consider ourselves as new-born babes, and are to desire the unadulterated milk of God's Word, that we may grow thereby. It is not enough to be alive: we should desire to grow. To be saved is a great blessing; we ought not, however, to be contented with being barely saved: we should seek after the graces of the Spirit and the excellent work of God within us.

**3.** *If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

Have you tasted this? Oh! search yourselves and see, and, if ye have, then prove it by the laying aside of the evil, and the thirsting after the good.

**4, 5.** *To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, And precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

The priesthood, among believers, does not belong to here and there one, but to the whole company of believers. As many as love the Saviour are priests and kings unto God, and they should regard their whole life as the exercise of this priesthood. When we assert that no platt is holy above another, we do not thereby desecrate any place, but rather consecrate all places. We believe every day to be holy, every hour to be holy, every place and occupation to be holy to holy men, and we should so live as evermore to exercise this consecrated priesthood.

**6-8.** *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*

of which we can only say, with Augustine, "Oh! the depth," and leave that mystery to be explained to us hereafter.

**9, 10.** *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of*

*him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

How good it is to look back to the hole of the pit whence we were digged!

What if today the sovereign grace of God has made us royal priests, yet let us remember that in past times we were not a people, “But are now the people of God.” “Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” Yes, I think no exercise will be more profitable by way of expressing our gratitude than the remembering what we used to be before the hand of God was laid upon us in love; for if all of us did not run to an excess of riot in our outward lives, yet some of us did; and others who were kept from gross outward sins had, nevertheless, a very sink of corruption within our nature. We felt that when the Spirit of God convinced us of sin we could truly say: —

“Depths of mercy, could there be,  
Mercy yet reserved for me?”

And having obtained mercy, we will never cease to bless the name of God.

**11-14.** *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.*

Christians should be good citizens. Though in one respect they are not citizens of this world, yet as they find themselves in it they should seek the good of those among whom they dwell, and be patterns of order.

**15-17.** *For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.*

Even if they are beggars, they are men: honour them. There is God's image, though marred and defiled, in every man; and because he is a man, honour him — pity him. Look down upon him never with contempt, but always feel that there is an immortal spark, even within that mass of filth. If the man be cast into all manner of beggary and wickedness, "Honour all men Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King." The same verse that says, "Honour the King," however, says, "Honour all men," and while we, therefore, have due respect to rank, yet a man is a man, and we "Honour all men."

**18-20.** *Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*

I have known some that could not do that, however. If they were only spoken to very gently, they were in a tiff directly. "But if, when ye do well, ye bear it patiently, this is acceptable with God." Here is something more than human nature can bear. Now grace comes in to help. "This is acceptable with God."

**21.** *For even hereunto were ye called:*

Called, you see, to be buffeted when you don't, deserve it.

**21-23.** *Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*

Herein is he a pattern of patience to all his people.

**24-25.** *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed, For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

## **1 PETER 2:1-12**

**1.** *Wherefore laying aside all malice,*

This is one of the old corruptible things, so put it away from you

**1. *And all guile,***

All crafty tricks, all falsehood, exaggeration, double meanings to your words, and the like,-

**1. *And hypocrisies, and envies,***

All hatred of those who are either better or better off than you are,-

**1. *And all evil speaking,***

Thus the tongue expresses what the heart feels. Laying all these evil things aside, you will prove that you have been born again, born of the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever.

**2. *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:***

You are in the family of God, but you are only babes in it yet; you have to grow to the stature of men in Christ Jesus, so “desire the sincere (unadulterated) milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” There is no other way of growing.

**3, 4. *If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone,-***

So that “the Lord” here meant is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is truly “a living stone,”-

**4. *Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,-***

When men disallow Christ, it is a matter of small account to us, as for what they have to say, it is less than nothing and vanity. Like the wild bluster of the winds, let it bluster until it has blown itself out. Christ is “disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,”-

**5. *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priest-hood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.***

See what Jesus Christ has made of you who believe in him; by the incorruptible blood and the incorruptible seed, he has brought you into a heavenly priesthood, and you are today to stand at the spiritual altar, and “to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Will you not pray, will you not praise, will you not love? These are sacrifices with which God is well pleased.

**6, 7. *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on***

*him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.*

Is he not? Then, enjoy his preciousness all of you who truly believe in him. Precious Christ, precious to all his people, precious to me!

**7, 8.** *But unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*

When Peter wrote these verses, he must have thought of his own name. He was called a stone or a rock; and once he was to his Master “a rock of offence” when he stumbled at Christ’s word, and began even to rebuke his Lord, but he was forgiven and saved, so now he gives a warning to others lest they should still more grievously sin by making Christ himself to be to them “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.”

**9.** *But ye are a chosen generation,-*

Hear this, ye believers, drink in this precious truth. See God’s election, making you to be a people born of the Holy Ghost: “a chosen generation,”-

**9.** *A royal priesthood,-*

This is a wonderful combination, kings and priests at the same time; all honours meet on you through divine grace: “a royal priesthood,”-

**9.** *An holy nation, a peculiar people;-*

You have national privileges. God reckons you not as a mob or a herd of men, but as a nation, and a nation with this peculiar hall-mark upon you, that you are “a holy nation.” This is the true token of your nationality that you are “holiness unto the Lord,” “a peculiar people” belonging to God alone, marked off from the rest of mankind as peculiarly his. You are not, and you are not to be as other men are, you are “a peculiar people.” Your road is not the broad one where the many go, it is the narrow one which the few find, your happiness is not worldly pleasure, but pleasures at the right hand of God which are for evermore, You are “a peculiar people”;-

**9.** *That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:-*

You are to be advertisers of the praises or virtues of Christ, not only to know them, and to be glad to know them, but to make them known to others. Beloved, how far are you doing this? I put the question personally to each one of you, for you were chosen by God on purpose that you “should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light”:-

**10.** *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God:-*

In time long past, who ever heard of the Britons, or of the Anglo-Saxons? We were not a people, but we “are now the people of God”:-

**10.** *Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

We may well leap for joy, we who once had not obtained mercy. We sinned against the Lord, but he was long-suffering, and now we have obtained mercy.

**11.** *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims,-*

For you belong not to the corruptible world, you are of an incorruptible race: “I beseech you as strangers and pilgrim,”-

**11, 12.** *Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul: having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers,-*

Which they are sure to do. The better you are, the more will they censure you. This is the only homage that evil can pay to good, to fall foul of it, and misrepresent it: “that whereas they speak against you as evildoers,”-

**12.** *They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. through the efficacy of his great atoning sacrifice. God grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.*

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 PETER 1:17-25; AND 2:1-12.

## **1 PETER 2:18-25**

Peter is very practical in his Epistles. In the early days of the faith, Christians occupied a far more difficult and dangerous position than they do today. They were few in number, and greatly despised. All manner of crimes were falsely alleged against them;

they were accused of things too vile for me to mention. The apostle, in writing to these Christians, begs them so to behave that they should commend the gospel of Christ. Very many of them were servants or slaves; so the apostle says to these lowly followers of Christ, "Here are your duties": —

**18-20.** *Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*

A sense of injustice stings a man; he does not like to lose his rights, or to be buffeted when he has done no ill; but the Spirit of Christ teaches us to "endure grief, suffering wrongfully," — to bear still, and still to bear. We are to be like the anvil; let others strike us if they will, but we shall wear out the hammers if we only know how to stand still and bear all that is put upon us.

**21-23.** *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*

There was no reason why he should be made to suffer, for he had done no wrong. He was buffeted for no fault of his own, yet how patiently he endured it all! He did not even open his mouth to murmur or complain; but he handed the whole matter over to the Supreme Court of Appeal: "to him that judgeth righteously." It will be wise for us also to feel that we can afford to wait, knowing that our Avenger liveth, and that, in his own good time, he will rectify all wrongs, and justify his people against all their accusers. It is sweet, for the dear love of Jesus, to put up with a thousand things which, otherwise, we should resent. "But," says one, "if you tread on a worm, it will turn." Perhaps it will, but a Christian is not a worm; he is a being of a nobler order than that, and he does not go for his example to reptiles; he looks up to Christ, and follows his steps.

**24, 25.** *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

Wherefore, since you have been brought back by the rich grace of God, continue to bear and forbear, that you may be the means of bringing others back. That is Peter's counsel to servants, or slaves, as most of them were.

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 PETER 2:18-25; AND 3:1-17.

### **1 PETER 3:1-17**

**1, 2.** *Likewise, ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.*

Could any men be won to Christ without the Word? Yes, it was even so in the apostle's day. When they refused to attend the little Christian meetings that were being held, and so could not hear what was there said, yet, at home, they saw the change that the gospel of Christ had wrought in their wives, and they said, "She is quite different from what she used to be. Certainly, she is a far better wife than any heathen woman is; there must be something in the religion which can make such a change as that." In this way, without the Word, many of them were won to Christ by the godly conversation of their wives.

**3, 4.** *Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

There is no ornament like that. No taste can ever conceive anything so lovely as a holy character. No expensive materials, and no ingenious fashioning of them, can ever produce such true beauty as "a meek and quiet spirit." You must have known some godly matrons, venerable Christian women, whose gentle piety has blessed the whole household of which they formed a part. They attained supreme authority over all simply by yielding; they gained a

queenly position in the house by gentleness and quietness. Nobody dared to offend them; — not because they would have been in a passion, but because they were themselves so inoffensive, so kind, so gentle.

*5-7. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: even as Sara, obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

It has been one of the most beautiful results of the spread of the Christian religion that it has uplifted womanhood; so that now, instead of women being, as they were, and still are where the gospel is not received, the slaves of their husbands, Christianity has taught that honour should be given to the wife. If there are any husbands who do not so, they err from the gospel way.

**8. Finally, be ye all of one mind, —**

Be unanimous; do not hold church-meetings to talk about nothing, and so quarrel for the want of something to do. Be united with the resolve that you will glorify God, and that there shall be no dissension, no division among you: “Be ye all of one mind,” —

**8. Having compassion one of another, —**

Have true fellow-feeling towards each other.

**8. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:**

The Christian should be the highest type of gentleman, in every respect the most gentle man, kind, self-forgotten, seeking the comfort and well-being of others to the utmost of his power.

**9. Not rendering evil for evil, —**

That, is beastlike; it is certainly not the rule for a Christian. Good for evil is Godlike; and ye, who are the children of God, should seek to act as he does: “not rendering evil for evil,” — .

**9. Or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.**

Every man should give away according to what he has. He who gives curses probably gives them because he has so much cursing in

him. You can always tell what a man is like by noticing what comes from him. If he curses, it is because curses abound in him. But you are to give blessing to others because you have inherited so much blessing from Christ; your whole tone, temper, spirit, language, action should be the means of blessing to others.

**10.** *For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:*

Not only no lies, but no guile, no deceit, no shuffling. Say to a man's face all that you say behind his back. You will soon be in trouble if you have two tales to tell, one in his presence, and the other in his absence; but if you are free from "policy" — from "knowing how to play your cards," as the world says, then shall it be seen that you have one of the attributes of a true Christian. If you refrain your lips, that they speak no guile, people will know where to find you, and they will want to find you, for such men are always in demand.

**11, 12,** *Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

He "sets his face against them," as we say that we set our face against certain company which we do not approve. But "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous," — that is, those who seek to do good to others, for Christ's sake, are under the special protection of God; and they have the high privilege of being permitted to pray with the certainty that "his ears are open unto their prayers."

**13-15.** *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

Have your doctrinal views, and all your knowledge of Christ, packed away in a handy form, so that, when people want to know what you believe, you can tell them. If they wish to know why you believe that you are saved, have your answer all ready in a few plain, simple sentences; and in the gentlest and most modest spirit make your confession of faith to the praise and glory of God. Who

knows but what such good seed will bring forth an abundant harvest?

**16, 17.** *Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer, for well doing, than for evil doing.*

Who can doubt the truth of that clear declaration?

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 PETER 2:18-25; AND 3:1-17.

## **1 PETER 4**

**1.** *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind:*

Accepting this great truth, that it is well that the flesh should die that the spirit may triumph, even as it was with Christ.

**1.** *For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;*

If he has indeed died with Christ, and the power of Christ's sufferings has made him dead to sin, he has ceased from it.

**2-4.** *That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God for the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:*

For the very thing in which they ought to speak well of you, men will speak evil of you. If you will not drink as they do, if you will not follow after sinful pleasures as they do, if you will not sing their songs, or use their language, then straightway they will hate you, and call you a hypocrite. It is a pity that, if we are not willing to go into sin as they do, they should for that reason speak ill of us; yet this is what we must expect.

**5.** *Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.*

There will be a day, when those who are alive at the coming of Christ will be judged; and those who were dead long before that time will not escape the judgment, for they shall be raised from their graves to appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

**6.** *for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*

Men who heard the gospel, and believed it, are now dead; they have undergone the sentence of death like other men; but, still, they are living “according to God in the spirit.”

**7.** *But the end of all things is at hand:*

We are never told the exact date of the times or seasons which are yet to come; it is the evident aim of the Holy Spirit to keep us on the tip-toe of expectation. We are always to be as men whose Lord may come at any minute of the day or night: “the end of all things is at hand: “ —

**7.** *Be ye therefore sober,*

Do not get intoxicated with anything, neither with pride, nor with covetousness, nor with the cares of this world. Maintain your equilibrium; stand steadfast and firm: “Be ye therefore sober,” —

**7, 8.** *And watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves:*

For, when Christ comes, he will know you as his disciples if you love one another; but if there be an absence of Christian affection when he comes, he will say at once that you have missed the main mark of discipleship.

**8.** *for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*

Not your own sins, but the sins of your friends, so that you will not see them. Where love is thin, there faults are always thick. Wherever there is true love in the heart, we make many apologies and allowances for the weaknesses and infirmities of our friends. Often, we cannot see the faults in them; and when we know they are there, we go backward, like the godly sons of Noah, and cover the nakedness upon which we will not think of looking, “for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.”

**9.** *Use hospitality one to another without grudging.*

Whenever saints of God traveled in those days, there were few public inns available for their accommodation, so they stayed with brethren in Christ as they went on their way.

**10.** *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

God's grace takes many shapes, it is manifold; and he gives to one brother one form of grace, and to another quite a different form; and, to a third, yet another form of his blessing. now, as nations increase their wealth by mutual commerce, so do Christian men increase their grace by a sweet fellowship in the good things with which God has entrusted them.

**11.** *If any man speak —*

Let him speak thoroughly well; but, in order that he may do so, what shall be his model?

**11.** *Let him speak as the oracles of God/*

As truthfully, carefully, solemnly, as the Book itself speaks: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."

**11.** *If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth.*

"If any man minister," or serve, — if he is called to serve the church in any capacity, — "let him do it as of the ability which God giveth."

**11.** *that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

Note how Peter has the same spirit in him as that which burned in the breast of Paul, for he stops in the middle of a letter, lays down his pen, and lifts up his heart to God in an adoring strain of thanksgiving: "to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

**12.** *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

In Peter's day, the Christians were called, not only to what might he metaphorically termed, "the fiery trial," but they had literally to suffer thus for Christ's sake. Nero had multitudes of Christians brought to his gardens, and tied to stakes, that he might light up his midnight revelries by the burning of these godly men and women smeared with pitch. they had to bear even that fiery trial for the name of Christ. Many periods of martyrdom have passed since then, in which the saints of God have willingly died rather than deny their Lord. We have fallen upon comparatively silken times; a jest, a slander, a calumnious observation, — these are the only weapons with which our enemies can smite most of us.

**13, 14.** *But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; did not your Saviour say, "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."*

So, be glad about it.

**14.** *For the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*

Whenever they speak against you that which is not true, they think that they shall slander the name of God by slandering you; but they do no such thing. As far as they are concerned, God is evil spoken of; but, then, that is all you could have expected from such people. "But on your part" — and that is the thing you have to look to, — "on your part he is glorified."

**15.** *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.*

A curious mixture that, — is it not? A murderer is classed with "a busybody in other men's matters." But, really, people of this latter sort are very obnoxious. there are some who seem as if they cannot mind their own business; I have heard that it is for two reasons; first, because they have not any business to mind, and, secondly, they have no mind at all with which to mind their business. But these very people think they can mind other people's business; and the more is the pity. See how strongly Peter condemns them, and asks that none of those to whom he writes may have to suffer because of such wrongdoing.

**16, 17.** *Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf for the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God :-*

Trial and testing must begin there; we must not expect to have our religion taken for granted, and ourselves to be saved simply upon our own warranty. We must be tried: "the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed?" "the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:" —

*17. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

If the wheat is winnowed, what is to become of the chaff? If God casts even the gold into the fire, what is to become of the dross? If that which is really valuable yet has to be tested, what is to be done with the mire and the clay? Oh, that all who have no part or lot with Christ would consider this solemn truth:

*18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, —*

If they be saved with difficulty, —

*18. Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

If even men who live godly lives are often hard put to it to know whether they shall be saved or not, — if they raise the question again and again with a terrible seriousness, “where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”

*19. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*

The whole run of the chapter is that we are to prefer any suffering of the flesh to the sin of the spirit; and we are to be prepared to endure whatever trial or pain may come upon us for Christ’s sake, and to hear it joyfully, rather than to seek the pleasures of sin, and to be plunged under the waves of the wrath of God. May he give us the grace thus to glorify him, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

## **1 PETER 4:1-13**

*1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin: —*

Brethren, we have a Saviour who suffered for us. As the Head was, such must the members expect to be. Let us, then, be resolutely determined that, suffer as we may, we will never turn aside from our Lord; for, inasmuch as we suffered in him, yea, and died in him, we ought to reckon that we are henceforth dead to sin, and that we have ceased from it, and can no longer be drawn into it. “He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin:”—

*2. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.*

The doctrine of substitution is the strongest possible argument for holiness. You lived in sin once, but Christ died for your sin, so you must reckon that, in him, you died to sin, seeing that he died in your stead. And the argument is that, henceforth, your life is to be a life in him, a life of holiness, to the praise and glory of God.

*3. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, —*

Suffice? O brethren, let it do much more than that! Let it make us cry, “Would God that we had never wrought the will of the Gentiles at all!” Some young people foolishly say that they must have a little space in which they can “see life.” Ah, those of you who have been converted in after years regret that ever you saw what men call “life”, which is but the alias for corruption and death! “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,” —

*3, 4. When we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excesses of wine, revellings banquetings, and abominable idolatries. Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:*

What a strange world this world is! It speaks evil of men because they will not do evil. Yet it has ever been so; the men, “of whom the world was not worthy,” have been the very people of whom worldliness have said, “Away with such fellows from the earth! It is not fit that they should live.” The world’s verdict concerning Christians is of little value.

*5, 6. Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men is the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*

This is a very difficult passage to expound, but I suppose the meaning is that the gospel was preached to those departed saints who had been called to die for Christ’s sake, and that it was preached to them for this very reason, that, while they were judged by wicked men, and were by them condemned to die, they still live a far more glorious life than they lived here, because they were thus

enabled, by their martyr death, to consummate their consecration to God.

**7, 8.** *But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*

It covers them sometimes by not seeing them; for, where there is much love, we are blind to many faults which, otherwise, we might see; we do not exercise the sharpness of criticism which malice would be sure to exercise. Besides that, when love applies herself to prayer, and when, in addition to prayer, she kindly gives admonition to a beloved friend, it often happens that true Christian love does really prevent a multitude of sins.

The apostle does not mean that, by loving another person, I shall cover my own sin; nor does he mean that the exercise of charity, in the common acceptation of that word, can cover my sin. But if I have much love to others, I may be the instrument, in the hand of God, for covering many of their sins in one or other of the senses I have mentioned.

**9, 10.** *Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

Whatever “the gift” is, whether it be money, or talent, or grace, “even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” God gives much to you that you may give it to others; it is only meant to run through you as through a pipe. You are a steward and if a steward should receive his lord’s goods, and keep them for himself he would be an unfaithful steward. Child of God, see to it that you faithfully discharge your responsibility as one of the “good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

**11-13.** *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

If you do not share in Christ's humiliation, how can you expect to share in his exaltation? But if worldlings begin to rebuke and reproach you, take it for granted that they can discern something of Christ in you. Dogs do not usually bark at those who live in the same village with them; it is only at strangers that they bark. And when ribald tongues are lifted up against you, you have reason to hope that you are a stranger and a foreigner to the citizens of this world, for they love their own, as our Saviour reminded his disciples, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you"

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 88:10-61; AND 1 PETER 4:1-13.

### **1 PETER 5:1-9**

*1. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:*

Here again, as in the first chapter, Peter links the sufferings of Christ with his glory.

*2-9. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 PETER 1, AND 5:1-9.

# 2 PETER

## 2 PETER 1

1. *Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:*

Peter here uses both his names, -Simon or Simeon, which was his first name, and signifies “hearing with acceptance,” and happy are they who have the hearing ear and the receptive heart; and then there is what I may call his Christian name, the name which Christ gave him, Petros, or Cephas, a rock or stone. Those who learn to hear well, since faith cometh by hearing, may hope to obtain even greater stability of character than Peter had. Observe that Peter calls himself “a servant of Christ.” There is no higher honour than to be a servant of God. “To serve God is to reign.” An ancient philosopher was the author of that maxim, and Christianity fully endorses it. He is a true king who is a servant of God. In this respect, all believers are on a level with Peter, but here is his distinguishing title, “an apostle of Jesus Christ,” a sent one, one who had seen the Lord, and who could bear personal testimony to the fact of his existence, his death, and his resurrection. Hence the apostleship has ceased, since there are no longer any who lived in our Lord’s days upon the earth.

Mark the reason why this Epistle, like the first, is called “the general Epistle of Peter,” since it is addressed, not to any one church, as Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians but to all saints, not to the Hebrews alone, but to the Gentiles as well. It is a general Epistle, addressed to all those who have

“obtained like precious faith.” These words were written by the apostle Peter many centuries ago, yet they come to us as fresh as if he had written them but yesterday, and may God grant us grace to profit from them as they are read by us today! After the apostle’s titles comes the salutation of his Epistle,

**2-5.** *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath*

*given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this,-*

“Since it is God who, by his divine energy, has made you partakers of the divine nature, see that you use your grace-given energy; rest not idly upon your oars because the tide of grace carries your ship onward.”

### **5. Giving all diligence,-**

It is not man’s effort that saves him; but, on the other hand, grace saves no man to make him like a log of wood or a block of stone; grace makes man active. God has been diligently at work with you; now you must diligently work together with him.

*5-7. Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*

As you have seen the mason take up first one stone, and then another, and then gradually build the house, so are you Christians to take first one virtue, and then another, and then another, and to pile up these stones of grace one upon the other until you have built a palace for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Faith, of course, comes first, because faith is the foundation of all the graces, and there can be no true grace where there is no true faith. Then “add to your faith virtue,” which should have been translated “courage.” True courage is a very great blessing to the Christian, indeed, without it how will he be able to face his foes? “And to courage knowledge,” for courage without knowledge would be foolish rashness, which would lead you to the cannon’s mouth when there was nothing to be gained by flinging away your life. “And to knowledge temperance;” for there are some who no sooner get knowledge than they are carried away with the new doctrine which they have learned, and become like men intoxicated, for it is possible to be intoxicated even with truth. Happy is that Christian who has temperance with his knowledge who, while holding one doctrine, does not push that to the extreme, but learns to hold other doctrines in due conformity

with it. “And to temperance patience,” or endurance, so that we are able to endure the “trial of cruel mockings” or sharp pains, or fierce persecutions, or the usual afflictions of this life. He is a poor Christian who has no power of endurance, a true Christian must “endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” “And to endurance godliness:” having a constant respect to God in all our ways, living to God, and living like God so far as the finite can be like the Infinite. “And to godliness brotherly kindness.” O dear friends, let us be very kind to those who are our brothers in Christ Jesus; let the ties of Christian kinship unite us in true brotherhood to each other. “And to brotherly kindness charity;” let us have love to all men, though specially to the household of faith.

**8.** *For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

I am sure you do not wish to be barren; I cannot imagine that any of you will be content to be unfruitful; so seek after all these virtues, and may God help you to give diligence to the attainment of them.

**9, 10.** *But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:*

He who is diligent in seeking these graces is kept from falling. Every Christian is safe from a final fall, but he is not safe from a foul fall unless he is kept by grace.

**11.** *For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

In this life you can enjoy all the privileges of the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; and in the life to come you shall go into the harbour of eternal peace like a ship with all her sails full, speeding before a favorable wind, and not as one that struggles into harbour, — “Tempest-tossed, and half a wreck.”

**12.** *Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of the things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.*

We are not merely to preach new truths which people do not know, but we are also to preach the old truths with which they are familiar. The doctrines in which they are well established are still to be proclaimed to them. Every wise preacher brings forth from the treasury of truth things both new and old; --new, that the hearers may learn more than they knew before; old, that they may know and practice better that which they do already know in part.

**13, 14.** *Yea, I think it meet, As long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.*

In the last chapter of the gospel according to John, it is recorded how Christ prophesied concerning the death of Peter, that when he was old, he should stretch forth his hands, and another should gird him, and carry him whither he would not. The evangelist adds, "This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." The prospect of crucifixion was thus always before Peter's mind; and knowing what was to happen to him, he was not alarmed, but was rather quickened to greater diligence in stirring up the saints to make their calling and election sure. Hear thou behind thee, O Christian, the chariot wheels of thy Lord; hear thou behind thee the whizzing of the arrow of death, and let this quicken thy pace! Work while it is called today, for the sun even now touches the horizon, and the night cometh when no man can work. If we knew how short a time we have to live, how much more earnest, how much more diligent should we be! Let us be up and doing. "Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober," working diligently until the Lord comes, or calls us home to himself.

**15-18.** *Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. Peter and James and John were with Christ on the Mount of

Transfiguration, and Peter here bears his witness that they were not deceived when they bowed down before Christ, and worshipped him as Lord, nor were they deluded in expecting his coming and believing in his power.

**19, 20.** *We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.*

Even the prophets themselves did not always know the full meaning of their own prophecies. Many prophecies have never been completely understood until they have been fulfilled. This passage also appears to me to mean that no prophecy is to be restricted to any one event, so as to say, "This prophecy has been entirely fulfilled."

**21.** *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

So that they sometimes spoke what they did not themselves understand; the prophecy carried its own key within itself, and the key could not be found until the prophecy was fulfilled. I believe that the prophesies in the Revelation, and in the books of Daniel and Ezekiel are very much of this character, and that, while it is quite right to watch for and expect the coming of the Lord, we shall spend our time more profitably in preaching the doctrines of the gospel than in meditating upon the mysterious prophecies of the Word. They will be understood when they are fulfilled, but we do not think they will be fully understood before that time.

## **2 PETER 1:1-8**

**1.** *Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, Peter was pleased to be able to write those words.*

There was a time when he had thrice denied his Master, but now he is glad to call himself "a servant of Jesus Christ." Once he had said, "I know not the man," but now he claims that he has been sent out by that glorious Lord to be his apostle,-a sent one,-"a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ." Probably he had ringing in his ears, at that moment, those blessed words, "Feed my sheep; feed my

lambs;” and he was going to do that work again in this his second general Epistle.

**1. *To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.***

These Epistles are not written to everybody. Some readers do not seem to remember this fact. This one is written, says the apostle, “to them that have obtained like precious faith with us.” The faith of the weakest believer in Jesus is the same kind of faith as that which was found in Simon Peter, who stands among the very first of the worthies in the College of Apostles.” Like precious faith with us.” Only think of it, you whose faith is of a very trembling sort, which might be well described as “little faith.” Yet yours is “like precious faith” with that of Peter and the rest of the apostles.

The tiniest diamond is as truly a diamond as the Kohinoor, and the smallest faith, if it be really the work of the Spirit of God, is “like precious faith” with that of the apostles.

**2. *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you-***

You have some measure of these choice blessings; may you have a great many times as much! When we go to the multiplication table, we not only multiply by two and by three, but we can multiply by a hundred, we can multiply by ten thousand. Oh, that God would thus multiply to us the grace and the peace that he has already given to us! “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you”-

**2. *Through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,***

The more we know of God, the more grounds and reasons shall we have for enjoying grace and peace, and the more we know of God and of Jesus our Lord, the more will our enjoyment of grace and peace be multiplied.

**3. *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:***

It is through knowing God that we realize that “his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,” for all these things are in him; and as we know him, trust him, love him, and become like him, we also come to possess all these precious things in him.

4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

See what is God's great object in giving us these "exceeding great and precious promises." It is that we may become morally and spiritually like himself, -just and true and holy and righteous, even as God himself is. O brothers and sisters, we fall far short of the high example that we find set before us in our gracious God, nevertheless, we press forward towards the goal, strengthened by God himself, who, having begun to make us like himself, will never cease that blessed work until he has fully accomplished it.

5. *And beside this, giving all diligence,-*

For we cannot expect to go to heaven asleep. We are not taken there against our wills. It is not our will that accomplishes our salvation; but still, it is not accomplished without our will. "Giving diligence," yes, but more than that, "giving all diligence,"-

5, 6. *Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance;*

It is ignorance that is intemperate and rash.

6-8. *And to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness' brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

What Christian ever wishes to be barren or unfruitful? Is it not the aspiration of every branch in the true vine to bring forth much fruit?

## **2 PETER 1:9-21**

9. *But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off,*

He is short-sighted; he has some light, and some physical sight, but he cannot see to a distance; spiritually, he is blind.

9. *And hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*

It is a great mercy not merely to see men as trees walking, but to have clear spiritual vision. There is a great deal of dust that gets into our eyes, and there is no way of clearing out that dust, and becoming long-sighted, getting a sight that can see to heaven, except by

getting that spiritual life which manifests itself in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

**10.** *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall:*

This is the second time that Peter writes about giving diligence. We are told not to be slothful in business, and this matter of which Peter writes is the most important of all business. To prosper in this world may bring some advantages, but to prosper in heavenly things is infinitely better.” “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,”-that you may be sure of it, and that others may be sure of it too. Let it not continue a subject of question with you, “Am I the Lord’s, or am I not? Am I called by grace, am I chosen by God, or am I not?” Make these things sure beyond all doubt.

**11.** *For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

You shall get far into the kingdom, you shall know the innermost joys of it. You shall get near the King, and you shall become like the King; and when you come to die, you shall not be tugged into the harbor like a dismasted, water-logged vessel, but you shall go in like a full-rigged ship with all sails set, and so you shall have an abundant entrance into the fair haven of eternal felicity. May God grant us this unspeakable blessedness, so that we shall not “be saved, yet so as by fire” but that we shall find our heaven begun below, and go from heaven below to heaven above scarcely knowing any change at all! There have been saints who have found the steam of Christ’s love running so strongly, and carrying them down to the great ocean of eternal life, that they have scarcely known where the river and the ocean have met.

**12.** *Therefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things,-*

He who exhorts others to be diligent must not himself be negligent, and Peter most appropriately writes, “Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things,”-

**12.** *Though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.*

We need to preach the truth continually, for even those who know it need to be reminded of it again and again. Truth unpublished is like seed laid up in a florist's shop, it does not produce any result. We need to have the truth constantly sown in our hearts, and watered by the Holy Spirit that it may grow, and bring forth fruit.

**13.** *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;*

When people are as they should be, it is worth while to stir them up. You do not want to stir up dirty water, but you may stir that which is pure and sweet as much as ever you like. And a good fire sometimes becomes a better one by a little stirring up.

**14.** *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.*

The Lord had told Peter how he was to die. He had told him that he would die by crucifixion: "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." He knew that the day of his martyrdom was approaching, and so, being divinely warned, he was the more earnest to preach as a dying man to dying men. I have sometimes heard, as a criticism of that expression of Baxter's about a dying man preaching to dying men, the remark that it would be better, as living men, to preach to living men. It is quite true that we must throw all our life into our preaching; but, as a rule, living men are never more truly alive than when they are under a due sense that they are also dying men. When we realize that eternity is very near us, and we are consciously drawing near to the great judgment-seat of Christ, than all our faculties are fully aroused, and our whole being is bent on doing the Master's work with the utmost vigor and earnestness.

**15.** *Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.*

When we are gone from the earth, we want the truth that we have spoken to live on after us, we want even from our graves to continue to speak for Christ. Therefore it was that Peter kept on repeating the same truth over and over again. He hit this nail on the head many times, and sought to clinch it, so that, when he was gone, it would not start from its place, but would remain firmly fixed.

**16.** *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables,-*

He had no retractions to make as he came towards the close of his ministry. He did not have to say that, after all, he had been greatly mistaken; there had been an advance in theology since Jesus Christ had died, and he was sorry to say that he had preached a good deal when he was young which he would like to unsay now that he was old. Oh, no! Peter held fast to what he had previously preached because he knew that it was the very truth of God, and the other apostles had done the same, so that Peter could write, *We have not followed cunningly devised fables,-*

**16.** *When we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

Peter was one of the three who saw the Lord Jesus Christ in his glory upon the Mount of transfiguration, and he recalls this.

**17, 18.** *For he received from God the Father honour and glory when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.*

Peter was not deceived about that matter; at the time, he and his fellow-apostles had been overcome by the too-transporting sight, but they all knew that it was no vision, or dream, or delusion, so Peter here speaks very positively concerning it. Why can we not receive the testimony of true witnesses such as Peter and the other apostles who sealed with their life's blood the witness which they bore to their Lord and his truth?

**19.** *We have also a more sure word of prophecy;*

Can anything be more sure than that which an eye-witness sees? Well Peter says that this prophetic Book, in which Holy Scripture is stored up is better to us than if we had even seen Christ himself. If any one thing be more sure than another, it is this blessed book-revelation of the Christ of God.

**19, 20.** *Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.*

It is not to be kept by any man to himself. God spoke to Jacob at Bethel, and we read concerning it, in Hosea 12:4, "there he spake with us." With regard to the children of Israel rejoicing at the Red Sea, we read, in the sixty-sixth Psalm, "There did we rejoice in him." The promises God made to this believing man or that he makes to all believing men. You remember that text, "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." That promise was first of all spoken to Joshua, yet Paul quoted it, in writing the Epistle to the Hebrews, as if it was spoken to every believer, and so indeed it is. No apostle, no prophet, could hedge up a promise, and say, "This was mine and nobody else's." It is a common heritage of all the saints. Every promise is within the boundary of the covenant of grace, and all who are in that covenant are heirs of all the promises, to whomsoever they were made.

**21.** *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

This is the foundation of our faith,-that this Book is divinely inspired. Suffer nobody to make you doubt concerning this matter; for you must give up Christianity itself if you give up the inspiration of this Book. You have nothing else to fall back upon but this Book and your own personal verification of it by the work of the Holy Ghost in your own soul. To tamper with inspiration is to tamper with the heart of true religion. The least doubt upon that matter is fatal. I mean what I say, and I know how desperately this mischief is working in these days in which we live. Men used to say, with the famous Chillingworth, "The Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants;" and so it was once. Yet now it seems to me that anything but the Bible is coming to be their religion but, as for us, we accept as authoritative nothing that contradicts these truths which are written in this Book. We mean to stand fast by these truths, God helping us; we can do no other, come what may in this evil age. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

## **2 PETER 1:16-21**

**16.** *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

There is need in these perilous times to come back to such an elementary truth as this. The truths taught us in God's Word are not fables, myths, or merely parables, but they are matters of actual fact. The apostles were eye-witnesses of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"- "eyewitnesses of his majesty." We receive these truths without the slightest question, and base our faith upon them. We should be troubled indeed if we had any doubts whatsoever about these great foundation facts of our holy religion.

**17, 18.** *For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.*

They were not deceived,-neither Peter, nor James, nor John. There was "such a voice" from God himself, which they literally heard; it was the Father bearing approving witness to the person and work of his only-begotten and well-beloved Son.

**19.** *We have also a more sure word of prophecy;*

Surely, nothing could be more sure than the evidence presented to the apostles in the holy mount. Yet Peter thus writes to express his utmost confidence in the Word of God. Surer than the light he saw, which dazzled him; surer than the voice he heard, which he never failed to remember, and to which he ever bore unfaltering witness; surer even than these things is that divine Book which is still preserved to us: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy."

**19.** *Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:*

You have already the assurance of the Word itself; you must build upon that, and upon that alone; but you shall have added to that a "day dawn" and a "day star" in your own hearts. We have the witness within us now: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God;" and those things which we

have received by faith we now have proved to be true by their effect upon our own souls. We know the light now because we walk in it; we know it to be light, for it has enlightened us.

**20, 21.** *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

How we do rejoice in this fact! We shall never give it up. It is a disbelief of inspiration, which lies at the bottom of all the modern theories; but with this disbelief we have not the slightest fellowship. In our inmost souls we believe that “holy men of God spake as they were moved (or, “borne along”) by the Holy Ghost.” They spoke not for their own age alone, neither were the prophecies given to a few persons so as to belong privately to them; but the whole inspired Scripture stands fast for all the faithful, and is the truth to us today, even as it was to those to whom it was first spoken.

This exposition consisted of readings from 2 PETER 1:16-21; 2:1-10.

## **2 PETER 2:1-10**

**1.** *But there were false prophets also among the people,*

How true that is still! Be not startled, brethren, as though some strange thing had happened to us in this generation. It always was so, and so it will continue. If there are true prophets, there will also be false prophets; and if there be the Spirit of God, there will be the spirit of evil; and often, in proportion as the everlasting truth is full of power, the everlasting lie will be full of power, too, and will strive mightily against it. That same sun and shower, which shall make yonder wheat to grow, will at the same time cause the thorns also to spring up; and perhaps for a time they may threaten to choke the wheat, until at last the wheat will choke the thistles.

“There were false prophets also among the people,”-

**1.** *Even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies,*

They always try to do their hateful work privily; and then they ask, “What is all this fuss about? We have not departed from the truth, we are as sound in the faith as any of you are,” when they know, traitors that they are, that they are undermining the

foundations, and trying to take away the very corner stone of the faith. These “false teachers” will deceive the very elect of God if it be possible; but they are not easily deceived, for God has given them a discerning mind by which they “try the spirits whether they are of God.” The Lord Jesus said of his sheep, “A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.” Sheep though they be, they have discernment enough to know their Shepherd; and the godly soon detect false teachers who privily “bring in damnable heresies,”-

**1, 2.** *Even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.*

They say, “It is narrow; it is old-fashioned; it is not in accordance with the spirit of the age.” I know not what else they say; but for all that they say, it still remains “the way of truth.”

**3, 4.** *And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;*

“If God spared not the angels that sinned,” he will not spare any who sin, however high their position may be; even though they be the angels of the churches, he will “cast them down to hell.”

**5.** *And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;*

Which some in these days say could not be consistent with the acts of a God of love. Their imaginary deity, from whom they have taken away every glorious attribute of holiness and justice, would not have done this; but the God that judgeth righteously must and will punish sin, as he ever has done; and “this God is our God for ever and ever,” even the God who is “a consuming fire.”

**6-8.** *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man*

*dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)*

I love to see in God's people a holy horror of the sin which surrounds them. In several of the prayers in which we joined before we came upstairs to this service, there were many tears and cries over the wickedness of our streets,-the impurity and the drunkenness which defile so many all around us. Alas! alas! Men seem bent on horrible iniquity; and it looks as if London, this great modern Babylon, will repeat the story of the cities of the plain. Well may we pray, "O Lord, have mercy upon the people!"

**9.** *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations,*  
As he delivered Lot,-

**9, 10.** *And to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government.*

We have far too many, nowadays, of both these sorts of sinners, and of the two sorts joined in one: "them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government."

**10.** *Presumptuous are they, self willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.*

There let us cease our reading, and turn to another holy song, in which we will praise our God, whose grace hath made us to differ from the ungodly by whom we are surrounded.

This exposition consisted of readings from 2 PETER 1:16-21; 2:1-10.

## **2 PETER 3**

**1-3.** *This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,—*

This prophecy is most certainly being fulfilled in these days.

**4.** *And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the father fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

“Inviolable laws still govern the material creation. Men are still swift to sin. Oppressors are not overthrown; and, oftentimes, the good are left to languish in poverty and suffering. ‘Where is the promise of his coming?’”

**5.** *For this they willingly are ignorant of,—*

Ignorant that there has been one great interposition of God to avenge the insults to his holy law, and to overturn the rule of sin: “For this they willingly are ignorant of,”

**5, 6.** *That by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:*

God did destroy man, and sweep away sin, with water once.

**7.** *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

There will come a second interposition; we know not when, but assuredly it shall come; and if the visitation tarry, we must wait for it; for it shall come, it shall not really tarry, however long it may seem to be delayed.

**8.** *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

There are no years to him; there are no days to the great Ancient of days. A thousand years must seem to be a mere speck in comparison with his everlasting existence,— as a dream when one awaketh, it has swiftly passed away; but God still remaineth.

**9.** *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Therefore does he wait. If men ask why there is no interposition of wrath to overthrow the ungodly, the answer is, because this is part of God’s great reign of love. He waits, because he is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;” yet there will be a limit even to his patience.

**10.** *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the*

*elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

The next and great judgment will be by fire.

**11, 12.** *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ?*

This should be the practical outcome of the anticipation of coming judgment. Let us look on “all these things” as passing away.

**13.** *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

The end of this world will be the beginning of a new and better one, of which “righteousness” will be the great characteristic.

**14.** *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*

There is, again, the practical note.

**15, 16.** *And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

The Scriptures are given for our learning; and, rightly used, guide us to the Saviour; yet, alas! some “wrest” them “unto their own destruction.” Let none of us ever be found committing such fatal folly as that.

**17, 18.** *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

I should like to point out to young Christians, and to all Christian people, how Peter finishes this Epistle, first with a warning and then with a counsel. He says, “Beware lest ye be led away,” and then he puts in a “but” —“but grow in grace.” If you go

into a plantation, at a certain time of the year, you may see a great number of trees that have no leaves upon them; how are you to know which are alive, and which are not? Well, you would soon know if you could look at their roots. If a tree has been growing, if its roots have taken hold upon the soil, you may pull it, but you will not stir it. There it stands; and, in likemanner, growth in grace brings fixity in grace. You who have faith, pray God that you may have growing faith. A living faith is a growing faith, and a growing faith is a living faith. Pray, therefore, that you may “grow in grace.”

This exposition consisted of readings from ACTS 3:11-26; ACTS 4:1-4; AND 2 PETER 3

## **2 PETER 3**

*1. This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:*

The purest minds need stirring up at times. It would be a great pity to stir up impure minds. That would only be to do mischief; but pure minds may be stirred as much as you please, and the more the better. There are hallowed memories in the minds of all Christians; but those memories are apt to lie asleep, and it is well to ring the alarm bell, and wake up all the memories within the believer's heart, even as Peter did when he wrote, “I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.”

*2. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour :*

Peter believed in the inspiration of the very “words” of Scripture; he was not one of those precious “advanced thinkers” who would, if they could, tear the very soul out of the Book, and leave us nothing at all; but he wrote, “That ye may be mindful of the words” — the very words — “which were spoken before by the holy prophets.” “Oh!” says one, “but words do not signify; it is the inward sense that is really important.” Exactly so; that is just what the fool said about egg-shells. He said that they did not signify; it was only the inward life-germ of the chick within that was important; so he broke all the shells, and thereby destroyed the life that was within. We contend for every word of the Bible, and believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture,

believing indeed that there can be no other inspiration but that. If the words could be taken from us, the sense itself would be gone.

**3.** *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers,*

—  
A prophecy which has been abundantly fulfilled. You need not go far to find them; they come in the form of living men, and they swarm in the form of their books. They are to be met with almost everywhere; like the locusts, they fill the air, and hide the light of the sun: “There shall come in the last days scoffers,” —

**3.** *Walking after their own lusts, —*

Errors of doctrine are almost always attended with errors of practice, and certainly they legitimately lead that way. Those who scoff according to the lusts of their intellect are very likely to live according to the lusts of their flesh. The two things are congruous; they are born from the same cause, they flourish for the same reasons, and they tend to the same ends: “Walking after their own lusts,” —

**4.** *And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

Only the modern scoffers have tried to improve upon their predecessors, for they say, “All things have developed by evolution from the beginning, which never had a beginning, but which somehow or other has always existed.” Thus the scoffers change their strain, but they never alter their spirit; it is always an attack upon revealed truth. Indeed, they scarcely seem to believe that there is any revealed truth, and they will only accept that which they might themselves have invented. Notwithstanding what these men say, all things have not continued as they were since the beginning of the creation, for there have been great interposition’s of divine power in the past, as Peter goes on to show.

**5-7.** *For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

Admire the power of God's Word., It was by the Word of God that the heavens were made, by the Word of God that the earth was drowned, by the Word of God that it has been preserved ever since, and will be preserved until, by that same Word, fire shall come to devour all the works of men. As surely as Noah's flood came, so surely shall there be a burning up at the appointed season: "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire?"

**8.** *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

You are in a hurry; you do not understand the infinite leisure of the Eternal One. The wondrous system of divine grace seems to have hardly room and scope enough in the few years that men give to it by their prophetic calculations; but God's prophecies are being fulfilled to the very letter. It may be that the length of time for their accomplishment will be far greater than any have imagined, yet to God it shall still be a very little while. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." We cry, "How long? how long?" Yet, according to God's reckoning, it is but the day before yesterday that Christ died, and only about a week ago that Adam was expelled from Eden. A thousand years is, after all, a very brief space of time. If it be measured by our life, it seems long; but what is the life of a man? Measured other ways, — and there are many other modes of measurement, — it grows even longer; but measured by the eternity of God, it is a vanishing point altogether, there seems to be nothing left of it.

**9.** *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

So he hurries not. He gives the sinner space and time and verge enough in which to repent. Oh, that man would turn to God, moved by that gracious long-suffering of his!

**10.** *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; —*

It is impossible to tell when it will come, but the day of the Lord will come, and, to the great mass of mankind, it will come as a thief in the night. Though often warned, they will not expect it. The Lord's saints will watch for him, for they are not in ignorance that

that day should overtake them as a thief; but, to the ungodly, the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; “ —

**10.** *In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

Men make great boasts concerning what they build, and there are many wonderful works of men upon the face of the globe; but the day will come when there will be no trace of them left, for they will have utterly disappeared. Why, then, should you and I live for these things, — for the things which are seen, which are temporal? O beloved, live for the things which are not seen, which are eternal!

**11.** *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, —*

These are garments which we should wear in prospect of eternity; these are things which no fire can touch, for holiness and godliness will outlive even the flames of the last great day.

**12, 13.** *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

We believe that God will, in the end, have a complete victory over sin, and that even this poor world of ours, purified by the fire, shall be lifted up, in a sevenfold splendor, to be a part of the great kingdom of our God: “New heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

**14.** *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*

Be diligent to get rid of all those spots which sin has made. In one sense, you are cleansed from them already; but in another sense, the purifying work must constantly go on. You are to overcome your besetting sin, yea are to vanquish all your tendencies to evil, every thought is to be brought into captivity to the mind of the Lord.

**15, 16.** *And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles,*

*speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

If Peter here alluded to the doctrine of election, and the great doctrines that spring out of predestination, that is no argument why they should not be preached; for if they are not to be preached because men wrest them, then nothing is to be preached, seeing that we are here told that they also wrest other Scriptures unto their own destruction. Any rope will do for a man to hang himself with; and any doctrine will suffice for a man to ruin himself with if he wishes to do so. The doctrine of divine mercy has been twisted into a reason why we should live in sin., The doctrine of human capability has been wrested into this falsehood, “I can repent when I like, or believe when I like; and therefore I may leave it to the very last.” There is no form of opinion which cannot be rendered mischievous. Our business is to study the Word, and preach it as we find it; and if men will wrest it, we cannot help that. Is it not so that the truth will always be a savor of life unto life to those who believe; and a savor of death unto death to those who perish?

**17, 18.** *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, —*

The only way to prevent falling is to grow; the tree that grows will not fall over.

**18.** *And in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

An ascription of praise to Christ is never out of place at the beginning or at the end of an Epistle, or in the middle of it. You may praise the Lord Jesus Christ anywhere at any time; it shall never be a waste of time to sing unto his name: “To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”



# 1 JOHN

## 1 JOHN 1.

**1 John 1:1.** *That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;*

You know who that is, who it is that John had heard, and seen, and looked upon, and handled, even Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

**2, 3.** *(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us,) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

The Father delights in his risen Son, no more to suffer and to die, having accomplished all his work; and I am sure that we have fellowship with the Father in that rejoicing. Then think what is the joy of Christ, who has passed through the shades of death, and risen from all the gloom of the sepulcher no more to die. I trust, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, that we have fellowship with him, for we also have risen with him unto newness of life.

**4.** *And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

“There,” the apostle seems to say, “if you have doubts, they will kill your joy. Doubt is a great joy-killer; but we have seen him, we have heard him, we have handled him who is the fountain of all true joy. Let no doubts come into your hearts, for these are well-attested facts of which we speak.

We live still,” saith John, -though, perhaps, when he wrote, he may have been the last survivor of the eleven, -“we live still, by our testimony concerning Christ, to confirm your faith, that your joy may be full.”

**5-7.** *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. if use say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness,*

*we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

That is, if we walk in the brightest light we can ever know, and if our fellowship with God is the highest that can be enjoyed this side heaven, we shall still need the cleansing blood of Jesus; and, blessed be God, we shall still have it, and we shall still find that it “cleanseth us from all sin.”

**8.** *If we say that we have no sin., we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

We are walking in darkness when we thus talk of light. It is easy for a blind man to talk of light though he cannot see it; and there are some who boast of very superior light who, nevertheless, are so much in the dark that they cannot even see their own sin.

**9, 10.** *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

The Lord bless to us the reading of his Word! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 33. AND 1 JOHN 1.

## **1 JOHN 1.**

May that Divine Spirit, who inspired every word of this wonderful letter, bless it to all our hearts as we read it!

**1 John 1:1.** *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;*

You remember how John begins his Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word “and how, a little later, he says, “In him was life.” The Holy Spirit seems to have recalled those expressions to his mind, for he moves him to use them again. Note how clearly, how explicitly, John writes concerning the Logos, the eternal Word. He says, “That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life,... that declare we unto you.” The facts of Christ’s history on earth are recorded by eye-witnesses who could not be deceived concerning them. They exercised their various senses with regard to Christ, — hearing, seeing, and touching him again and

again. They were veracious witnesses, and they died in testimony of their faith in what they asserted. And when anything has been heard, seen, inspected, and even touched and handle-, by a company of reliable witnesses, the testimony of such witnesses concerning it must be accepted as true.

*2. (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*

John and his fellow-apostles were eye witnesses of the coming to earth of God in human flesh, — the indwelling of the Word of life in a body like our own,

*3, 4. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

Hear ye this, ye people of God! The object of the revelation of Jesus Christ is that you may have joy, — yea, that you may have a heart full of joy, and that you may know what full joy means; for, here below, we get but drops and dashes of joy, unless we are brought into fellowship with God through Jesus Christ; and, then, we have the very joy of God in our souls. Oh, the delight of it! Oh, that you could all know it to the full!

*5. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

That is to say, God is knowledge, God is truth; God is purity. “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” There is no darkness of sin, or ignorance, or error about God.

*6. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth;*

He who walks in ignorance and sin, is in fellowship with the powers of darkness; but he is certainly not in fellowship with God, who is light.

*7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

So that, in the very highest state to which we can attain in this world, namely, walking in the light, as God is in the light, and

having fellowship with him, even then we shall sin, and shall still need the blood of Christ to cleanse us from its stain. So those err exceedingly who say that the Christian man can or does live utterly free from sin. Either they have lowered the standard by which they judge the actions of men, or they excuse themselves on some Antinomian principle, or else they must be altogether ignorant of the truth about the matter; for “if we walk in the light, as God is in the light,” and have fellowship with him, still “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;” and, therefore, there is sin needing to be cleansed, for Christ does no work as a superfluity. But what a mercy it is for us to feel the continual cleansing of the precious blood of Jesus, so that, if we sin through ignorance, or if we sin by omission or by commission, that precious blood constantly keeps us so pure, that we can still walk with God!

**8.** *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

It does not matter either, in what sense we say it. We may try to beguile ourselves with the idea that we say it in some peculiar gospel sense; but “we deceive ourselves” if we say it in any sense whatsoever, for we have sin, and we do sin.

**9.** *If we confess our sins, —*

That is the point; and he, who says that he has no sins, will not confess them. He, who believes himself to be perfect, cannot enjoy the blessing described in this 9<sup>th</sup> verse. To deny that we have any sin, is to walk in darkness, and to show we are without the light which would reveal our sin to us, kind if we are walking in darkness we cannot be in fellowship with God. But to see sin in ourselves from day to day, humbly to confess it, and mourn over it, is to walk in the light; and walking in the light, we shall have fellowship with God who is light. “If we confess our sins,” —

**9, 10.** *He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all, unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 John 1 and 2:1-6.

## **1 JOHN 1:1-3.**

**1.** *That which was from, the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life;*

The fact that Christ was really in the flesh, that he was no phantom, no shadow mocking the eyes that looked upon him, is exceedingly important, and hence John (whose style, by the way, in this Epistle is precisely like the style which he uses in his Gospel) — John begins by declaring that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who in his eternity was from the beginning, was really a substantial man, for he says, “We have heard him” — hearing is good evidence; “Which we have seen with our eyes” — eyesight is good, clear evidence certainly; “Which we have looked upon” — this is better still, for this imports a deliberate, careful, circumspect gaze; but better still, “Which our hands have handled” — for John had leaned his head on Jesus Christ’s bosom, and his hands had often met the real flesh and blood of the living Saviour. We need have no doubt about the reality of Christ’s incarnation when we have these open eyes and hands to give us evidence.

**2.** *For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you, that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;*

That same eternal Being who is Very God of Very God, and is worthy to be called essentially Life, was made flesh and, dwelt among us, and the apostles could say, “We beheld his glory.”

**3.** *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you,*

See how he does hammer this nail as if he will drive it fast! How he rings this bell that it may toll the death-knell of every doubt!

**3.** *That ye also may have fellowship with us:*

But John, what is the value of fellowship with you, you and your brethren, a parcel of poor fishermen; who warts fellows with you — hooted, despised, mocked, and persecuted in every city — who wants fellowship with you?

**3.** *And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

What a leap from the fisherman to the Father’s throne, from the poor, despised son of Zebedee up to the King of Kings! Oh! John,

we would have fellowship with thee now T We will have fellowship with thy scorn and spitting, that we may have fellowship with thee, and with the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ.

This exposition consisted of readings from GENESIS 24:1-16; 1 SAMUEL 30:1-13; 1 JOHN 1:1-3.

## **1 JOHN 1:1-10**

**1 John 1.1.** *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;*

The fact that Christ was really in the flesh, that he was no phantom, no shadow mocking the eyes that looked upon him, is exceedingly important, and hence John-(whose style, by the way, in this epistle is precisely like the style which he uses in his Gospel)-John begins by declaring that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who in his eternity was from the beginning, was really a substantial man, for he says-“ We have heard him “-hearing is good evidence, “ Which we have seen him with our own eyes; “ eye-sight is good, clear evidence, certainly, “ Which we have looked upon “- this is better still, for this imports a deliberate, careful, circumspect gaze; but better still- “which our hands have handled,” for John had leaned his head on Jesus Christ’s bosom, and his hands had often met the real flesh and blood of the living Saviour. We need have no doubt about the reality of Christ’s incarnation when we have these open eyes and hands to give us evidence.

**2.** *(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*

That same eternal Being who is Very God of Very God, and is worthy to be called essentially Life, was made flesh and dwelt among us, and the Apostles could say-“ We beheld his glory.”

**3.** *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you-*

See how he does hammer this nail as if he will drive it fast! How he rings this bell that it may toll the death-knell of every doubt!

**3.** *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us:*

But John, what is the value of fellowship with you, you and your brethren, a parcel of poor fishermen, who wants fellowship with

you-hooted, despised, mocked and persecuted in every city-who wants fellowship with you?

*3. And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ.*

What a leap from the fisherman to the Father's throne, from the poor, despised son of Zebedee up to the King of Kings! Oh, John, we would have fellowship with thee now! We will have fellowship with thy scorn and spitting, that we may have fellowship with thee, and with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

*4. And these things write I unto you that your joy may be full.*

Some Christians have joy, but there are only a few drops in the bottom of their cup; but the Scriptures were written, and more especially the doctrine of an Incarnate God is revealed to us, that our joy may be full. Why, if you have nothing else to make you glad the feet that Jesus has become brother to you, arrayed in your flesh, should make your joy full.

*5. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

Not a light, nor the light, though he is both, but that he is light. Scripture uses the term light for knowledge, for purity, for prosperity, for happiness, and for truth. God is light, and then in his usual style, John, who not only tells you a truth but always guards it, adds-"in whom is no darkness at all."

*6. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*

Mark here, this does not mean walking in the darkness of sorrow, for there are many of God's people that walk in the darkness of doubts and fears, and yet they have fellowship with God; nay, they sometimes have fellowship with Christ all the better for the darkness of the path along which they walk, but the darkness here meant is the darkness of sin, the darkness of untruthfulness. If I walk in a lie, or walk in sin, and then profess to have fellowship with God, I have lied, and do not the truth.

*7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light,-*

Not to the same degree, but in the same manner-

*7. We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

So you see that when we walk the best, when we walk in the light, as he is in the light, when our fellowship is of the highest order, yet still we want daily cleansing. It does not say-mark this O my soul-it does not say “ The blood of Jesus Christ cleansed “ but “ cleanseth.” If guilt return, his power may be proved again and again, there is no fear that all my daily slips and shortcomings shall be graciously removed by this precious blood. But there are some who think they are perfectly sanctified and have no sin.

**8, 9.** *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Oh, those words, and more especially that glorious word “ all! “ This must include the vilest sin that ever stained human nature, the blackest grime that ever came from the black heart of man. And now John is very careful when he strikes a blow to hit completely. He has already smitten those who say they have no sin, and now he smites those who say they did not at one time have any.

**10.** *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 130:1-8; 1 JOHN 1:1-10; 2:1-2.

## **1 JOHN 1:4-7**

**4.** *And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

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*7. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light,*

Not to the same degree, but in the same manner.

*7. We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

So you see that when we walk the best, when we walk in the light as he is in the light, when our fellowship is of the highest order, yet still we want daily cleansing. It does not say — mark this, O my soul — it does not. If say, The blood of Jesus Christ “cleansed,” but “cleanseth.” guilt return, his power may be proved again and again; there is no fear that all my daily slips and shortcomings shall be graciously removed by this precious blood. But there are some who think they are perfectly sanctified and have no sin.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 130; 1 JOHN 1:4-7.

## **1 JOHN 2 AND 3:1**

*1 John 2:1. My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not.*

This is one of the great objects of all that is written by inspiration, — that we may be kept from sin. O child of God, as thou wouldst fear to drink poison, as thou wouldst flee from a serpent, dread sin!

*1. And if any man sin, —*

Is it a hopeless case then? Far from it: “If any man sin,” —

*1-3. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

Holiness of life is the best proof that we know God. It matters not how readily we can speak about God, nor how much we suppose

that we love him, the great test is, do we keep his commandments? What a heart-searching test this is! How it should humble us before the mercy-seat!

**4-6.** *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandment, is a liar and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

When we try to be, in every respect, what God's Word tells us we ought to be, then may we know that we are in God; but if we walk carelessly, if we take no account of our actions, but do, after a random fashion, whatever comes into our foolish hearts, then have we no evidence at all that we are in God.

**7.** *Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning.*

The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. "From the time when Christ first began to preach, or when the gospel was first preached in your ears."

**8.** *Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*

That which is new in the gospel, in one sense, is not new in another; for, though John was about to write what he called a new commandment, yet, at the same time, he was writing something which was not novel, something which was not grafted upon the gospel, but which grows naturally out of it, namely, the law of love.

**9.** *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness, even until now.*

God is love, and God is light therefore, love is light, and the light of God is love. Where enmity and hatred are "till in the heart, it is proof positive that the grace of God is not there.

**10-15.** *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is*

*from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

For this sinful world is directly opposed to the Father. You cannot send your heart at the same time in two opposite ways, — towards evil and towards good; you must make a choice between the two.

**16, 17.** *For all that is in the world, the best of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. It ought not, then, to be difficult to make a choice between these fleeting shadows and the everlasting substance.*

**18.** *Little children, it is the last time: —*

You may read the passage, “It is the last hour,” as if John wanted to show how late it was, and how soon Christ would come: “It is the last hour:” —

**18.** *And as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*

How much more emphatically John might write this verse if he were writing today!

**19.** *They went out from us, —*

For, alas! many of the antichrists came out of the church; they sprang up from among the followers of Christ: “They went out from us,” —

**19, 20.** *But they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

“You who know God — and even the little children, the babes in Christ, know the Father, — know all “things; and you will not be led

astray and deceived by these antichrists who have gone out into the world”

**21.** *I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*

The truth is all of a piece, and a lie cannot be a part of the truth. Christ does not teach us a Jesuitical system in which error and falsehood are mixed up with truth; the gospel is all truth, and to those who believe it we may say, “Ye know the truth, and ye also know that no lie is of the truth.”

**22, 23.** *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: —*

They who deny the Deity of Christ practically deny the Divine Fatherhood of God. It is not possible for us to understand the rest of truth if we do not believe in Christ, who is the Truth. As the poet says, — “You cannot be right in the rest Unless you think rightly of him.”

**23-28.** *[But] he that acknowledgeth the son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And that is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and in truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, we shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; —*

That which is the subject of promise is also the subject of precept; and the precepts of the gospel are given to Christians because, in this way, God keeps his own promise, and so leads me to obey his precepts.

**28, 29.** *That, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

**1 John 3:1, 2.** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

## **1 JOHN 2.**

**1-4.** *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

Holy living is the sure fruit and proof of anyone being in Christ. Where it is not manifest, the profession of being in Christ is a lie.

**5.** *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

Note the gradation: we know him, we are in him we know that we are in him.

**6.** *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

Abiding in Christ helps us to live as Christ lived; not, as one well observes, that we can walk on the water as Christ walked upon it, but that we can walk in our daily life even as he did, because we abide in him.

**7.** *Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.*

The old commandment is the word which we have heard from the beginning, yet it is always fresh and new.

**8-10.** *Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

Love is the great and sure way of abiding in the light, abiding in Christ.

**11-14.** *But he that hateth his brother is in darkness and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*

Having overcome him, at the first by your faith in Christ you still go on to conquer him by abiding in Christ.

**15-17.** *Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

Everything else is transient, fleeting, and soon passeth away; but he that doeth the will of God has entered into the eternal regions, and he has himself become one of those who abide for ever. Do not be carried away, therefore, from your old firm foundation, and from your eternal union to Christ.

**18-20.** *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

You are taught of God, so you know all that is needful for the attainment of true godliness, and the accomplishment of the divine purpose.

**21-25.** *I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth; Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

Not transient life, but eternal life, is the great promise of the covenant of grace, and abiding in Christ we possess it.

**26, 27.** *These things hath I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you,*

What a wonderful declaration this is, — not only that we have this holy anointing, but that we have it always.

**27, 28.** *And ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now little children, abide in him; —*

See how the apostle rings out this note again and again. Our Saviour repeated the word “abide” or “remain” many times in the short parable of the Vine, and now John strikes this same silver bell over and over again: “And now, little children, abide in him; —

**28, 29.** *That, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

## **1 JOHN 2**

**1.** *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.*

For this we ought to watch and strive, that we sin not.

**1.** *And if any man sin-*

What then? Is it a hopeless case? Oh, no, far from it; it is a sad case, but there is a remedy for it: “and if any man sin,”-

**1, 2.** *We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

Come ye, then, to Christ for pardon, whether ye are Jews or Gentiles, whether ye are saints or sinners, whether ye are old or young, whether ye are moral or immoral, for God is both able and willing to forgive all manner of sin because of the propitiation offered by his well-beloved Son “ Jesus Christ the righteous.”

**3.** *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

Obedience is the test of discipleship. Mere head knowledge is all in vain, and all in vain our fears, unless we render a practical obedience to the commandments of Christ. We shall not only savingly know him, but we shall “ know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.”

**4.** *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him.*

This is a terrible condition for anyone to be in, to say that he knows Christ, and yet to have the Holy Spirit calling him a liar because he is not keeping Christ’s commandments. Again I remind you that obedience is essential to Christian discipleship. If we refuse to obey Christ’s commandments it is clear that we do not really know the Saviour at all, we are not even beginners in the school of Christ.

**5.** *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

When every word of his is precious to us and when we strive to live according to his precepts, then we know that “we are in him.” This is even more than knowing that we know him, for it is the assurance that we are united to him by a living connection which can never be broken.

**6.** *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

What a walk would that be! How holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners is the man who tries to walk even as Christ walked.

“ Lord, I desire to live as one Who bears a blood-bought name,

As one who fears but grieving thee,  
And knows no other shame.”

“ As one by whom thy walk below Should never be forgot.  
As one who fain would keep apart From all thou lovest not.”

**7-9.** *Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*

Love is the true test of light, that light which leads us to love God, to love Christ, to love the truth, to love God’s people, ay, and to love the whole world of men for their good, this is the love that attests the light we have to be the very light of God.

**10.** *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

A loving spirit, kind, generous, forgiving, unselfish, seeking the good of others,-this is one of the best proofs that our natural darkness has gone, and that true spiritual light is within us. Some persons think very much of the doctrine of Christ, but very little of the Spirit of Christ. Let such remember that it is written, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” If we do not know what it is to love, then we do not in the Scriptural sense know what it is to live, we are dead. Hatred is the cerement in which the dead soul is wound up, the grave clothes in which it is put away in the tomb; but love is the garment of life in which a truly quickened spirit arrays itself. The one who is full of hatred dwells in darkness, but he that loveth abideth in the light. Note how love and life and light are most blessedly linked to one another.

**11-13.** *But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you, for his name’s sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.*

“You are old men, and you like to think of old things. The everlasting love of God, the covenant made with Christ before the

worlds were formed these are things that are very dear to you; and you prize beyond all other; ‘him that is from the beginning.’”

**13.** *I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.*

“In the days of your strength, you have won the victory which no human power can ever win unaided. You have overcome that wicked one who would easily have overcome you if you had been left to fight him by yourselves. “

**13.** *I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.*

That is all that little children need to know at first. They may not know the great mysteries that the fathers have fathomed, they may not well know some things that the young men know, but even babes in Christ know the Father, and rejoice in his love.

**14.** *I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.*

Twice, you see, John says the same thing about the fathers, and he says nothing more concerning them; but truly to “have known him that is from the beginning is practically to know all that even the fathers need to know or can know, for this knowledge includes all other that is worth knowing.

**14.** *I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*

Here again John repeats his former statement concerning the young men, but he adds to it “because ye are strong and the word of God abideth in you.” There is a purpose in the repetition of each case, it is to emphasize the importance of the apostolic declarations.

**15.** *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.*

“Your affections are meant for something better than these transient and defiled things; so let not your heart’s love flow out to things so soiled and base. ‘Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.’”

**15.** *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

These two things are such deadly opposites that they cannot live together where the love of the father is, there cannot be the love of the world. There is no room in us for two loves. The love of the

world is essentially idolatry, and God will not be worshipped side by side with idols. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Does not that text draw a very sharp distinction between those who love the Lord, and those who love him not? Remember children of God, that this is the language of John, the apostle of love; but true love is honest, outspoken, heart-searching, heart-trying. Do not imagine that there is any love to your souls in the heart of the preacher who preaches smooth things, and who flatters you with his "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. No, the highest, deepest, most heaven-inspired love is that which searches and tries the heart felt there should be any deception there.

**16.** *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

That devil's trinity—"the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,"—"is not of the Father, but is of the world."

**17.** *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof:*

It is only a puff, a phantom, a bubble, a mirage which will melt away as you try to approach it; there is nothing substantial in it.

**17.** *But he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

Not, "he that doeth some great thing to be seen of men," not, "he that builds a row of almshouses, or leaves a great mass of money to charity when he dies, because he could not possibly carry it away with him," not, "he that sounds a trumpet before him to let everybody know what a good man he is;" not, "he that must needs outdistance everybody else;" but, "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Obedience to the will of God is the pathway to perpetual honour and everlasting joy.

**18.** *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*

And now, I think, even more than when John wrote, is this the fact for antichrists are multiplying on all sides, and there are even worse evils to come than we have seen as yet; and it therefore behooves Christians to be upon the watch and to let this truth comfort them, that "it is the last time." Once get through this

dispensation, and the battle is ended; even though the dispensation should be protracted beyond our hope and desire, yet, still, once get through it, and it is over. This is to be the last charge of our great adversary and all his hosts. Stand fast, therefore, ye soldiers of the Cross, stand like rocks amidst the onslaught of the waves, and the victory shall yet be yours.

**19.** *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*

The worst of men go out from among the best of men, the antichrists go out from the church of Christ. The raw material for a devil was an angel. To make a Judas, you must make him out of an apostle. May God purify his professing church since even in her own loins she breeds adversaries of the faith.

**20.** *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

The Spirit of God will teach you as you need to know. He will so instruct you that you shall know all that is for your soul's good, and for his own glory.

**21.** *I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*

That which is of man's making is false, "but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

**22, 23.** *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

Some pretend to honour the Father while they dishonour the Son, but this can never really be done. Jesus truly said, "I and my Father are one," so that he that denieth the Son denieth the Father also.

**24.** *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall, continue in the Son, and in the Father.*

As it was the truth that was revealed to them at the first, there was no need of a later revelation to correct the mistakes of the first, as some foolishly and falsely teach nowadays.

**25.** *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

Let those that want them have these novelties, these constant changes we who believe in Jesus have something far better, even the promise of eternal life.

**26.** *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*

They would lead you astray if they could so beware of them. “Forewarned is forearmed.”

**27, 28.** *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him;-How John continues to urge us to stand fast in Christ. As the Holy Ghost has taught us to trust Christ, so would he have us “abide in him.”*

And this is one great reason why we are to abide in him;”-

**28, 29.** *That, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

## **1 JOHN 2:1-2**

**1.** *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.*

He is anxious that they should not sin, he knows they do, and that if they say they do not, they lie. Still the Christian’s object is sinless perfection, and though he will never have it till he gets to heaven, that is all the better because he will always then be pressing forward, and never reckoning that he has attained.

**1, 2.** *And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

By which is meant, not only that Jesus Christ died for Gentiles as well as Jews, and for some of all nations, but that there is that in

the atonement of Christ which might be sufficient for every creature under heaven if God had so chosen every creature, the limitation lying, not in the value of the atonement itself, but in the design and intention of the Eternal God. God sent his Son to lay down his life for his sheep. We know that Christ redeemed us from among men, so that the redemption is particularly and specially for the elect; yet at the same time the price offered was so precious the blood was so infinite in value, that if every man that ever lived had to be redeemed Christ could have done it. It is this that make us bold to preach the Gospel to every creature, since we know there is no limit in the value of the atonement, though still we know that the design of it is for the chosen people of God alone.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 130:1-8; 1 JOHN 1:1-10; 2:1-2.

### **1 JOHN 2:1-6.**

**1.** *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.*

That you may abstain from it, and abhor it, and not indulge in anything that would lead you towards it.

**1.** *And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

We are to seek to live a perfectly holy life, but inasmuch as we constantly fall short of that ideal, here is our comfort; we still have an Advocate, we still have One who undertakes our cause, and pleads for us before his Father's throne.

**2.** *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

Whoever comes to him shall receive deliverance from sin. Neither Jew nor Gentile is exclusively considered in the offering of the atonement of Christ; those for whom he died are of every race, and color, and class, and kin.

**3-6.** *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

May the Holy Spirit graciously lead us all to this extraordinary walk of grace, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 John 1 and 2:1-6.

### **1 JOHN 3.**

I have read this chapter many times in your hearing, but we cannot read it too often, for it is full of the deepest and most important instruction. God grant that fresh light from above may shine upon it as we listen once more to the familiar words!

#### **1. *Behold,* —**

If you never used your eyes to good purpose before, use them so now:

**1. *What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:***

Let the truth of our adoption amaze us, — the adoption of such unworthy ones as we were to so high a relationship “that we should be called the sons of God.”

**1. *Therefore the world knoweth not, because it knew him not.***

There is no need to say to whom this last sentence refers; the pronoun “Him” is quite sufficient to indicate our Lord Jesus whom the world knew not. Every living, loving heart must at once have thought of “Him” who is the chief, the firstborn, the only-begotten Son of God.

**2. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God,* —**

It is enough to make the lame man leap as the hart to hear that blessed statement, and to know it to be true.

**2. *And it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.***

In proportion to our view of Christ is our likeness to him. Those who never saw him are not like him at all; those who have in a measure seen him are in a measure like him, they who see him as he is are like him. There is a transforming power about the image of Christ when it is seen by the soul: “We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

**3. *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.***

Discouragement and despair will not purify you, doubt and darkness will only make you worse than you were before; but the indulgence of this blessed hope that you are to be like Christ will

help you to purify yourself, “even as he is pure.” Therefore, beloved, have hope in God. Remember that it is one of Satan’s tricks and snares to try to discourage you, but it is God’s will to increase your hope, for thereby you increase in purity.

**4.** *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

This is the best definition of sin that can be given; let none of us ever tolerate any other idea of sin but that it is “the transgression of the law.”

**5, 6.** *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

That is to say, if sin is the habitual course of our life, we do not truly know the Lord. He who walks with God endeavors with all his might to be free from sin, and he is sanctified by abiding in Christ.

**7.** *Little children, let no man deceive you:*

Because you are little, you are apt to be deceived. There is a great blessedness in being little children, but there is also some danger connected with such a condition, so we must beware of those who would deceive us.

**7.** *He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

The test of a man’s real character must be what he does, not what he professes; not what he boasts of, but what is really the manner of his life.

**8, 9.** *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

He sinneth not with any pleasure, it is not the course of his life. There are, alas! in the best of men, infirmities and imperfections and failures. Would God these were all removed! Still, the man is not what he used to be; though he is not what he shall be, he is not what he once was.

**10.** *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*

Holiness and love are the marks of the true child of God; and where these are not to be found, a man must not bolster himself up with any notion that salvation is his, for he is no child of God.

**11, 12.** *For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

So that, when you see a man filled with hate and envy and malice, it is because his own life is not holy. There is no exception to this rule, true holiness and love always go together; where love is absent, holiness must be absent, too.

**13.** *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

See, Cain hated Abel, and the world hates the saints. It is the very nature and spirit of the world to hate those who are not of the world.

**14.** *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.*

Love becomes the distinguishing mark of the new life.

**14.** *He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

No matter though he may be outwardly religious, and may think that, by doing certain external actions, he will save himself, there is no truth at all in his religion, for the very essence of true religion is that a man lives not unto himself, but unto God, and for the good of his fellow-men.

**15.** *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer:*

He would get rid of that brother if he could, and he is therefore a murderer in spirit, for the essence of murder is not the dagger or the poison, but the desire to put out of existence or to do the utmost harm to the one who is hated. The essential element of murder lurks within the bosom of all hatred.

**15.** *And ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

His action is Cain-like, he is not of the chosen seed, he has not the life of God abiding in him.

**16.** *Hereby perceive we the love of God, —*

The master-love, the chief love that ever was in this world, —

**16-19.** *Because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.*

That is still the test; truthful love proves that “we are of the truth,” children of the God of truth, and so assures and tranquillizes our hearts before him.

Our hearts shall be calm, confident, and happy before God, when we know that true love flows within them.

**20-23.** *For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, us he gave us commandment.*

Faith worketh by love, we believe on the name of the Lord Jesus, God's well-beloved and only-begotten Son and that faith leads us to love all who bear his holy name.

**24.** *And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

If he hath given us the Spirit of Christ, then Christ himself is in us, if he hath given us the Spirit of love, that also is the evidence that Christ himself abideth in us. Oh, for more of that blessed Spirit in every one of us!

### **1 JOHN 3.**

#### **1.** *Behold, —*

For there is no greater wonder out of heaven than this: “Behold,”

**1.** *What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth it not, because it knew him not.*

As we are called the sons of God, we are to be made like his only-begotten Son; and here is the beginning of the likeness, that, as the world did not know him, and therefore crucified him, so it does not know the other sons of God, and therefore spends its malice upon them whenever it can. Yet what a marvellous thing is this, — what a wonder of divine condescension, that we who were the slaves of Satan, the children of disobedience, the heirs of wrath, should be called the sons of God! We can well accept the consequence of such a position without any very great sorrow: “Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”

**2. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, —***

Not merely in heaven, or when we come to die, but now, in this place, in our pain, in our sorrow, ay, notwithstanding our imperfections and infirmities, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God,” —

**2. *And it doth not yet appear what we shall, be:***

We are made like unto Christ; but when he was here, it did not then appear what he should be. If you had seen the lowly Nazarene, who was “despised and rejected of men,” could you have guessed what he will be in his glory when it shall please God to judge the world by Jesus Christ? So, in like manner, “it doth not yet appear what we shall be.”

**2. *But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.***

Every spiritual sight of him is transforming. Our looking at him here makes us what we are, our looking at him at the last shall make us like what he is. Oh! what joy to know that the medicine for our souls is taken in at the eyes of faith, and by the sight of Christ we are healed!

**3. *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. The great object of the Christian’s hope is perfect purification.***

If we expect to be like Christ, we look for it in the putting away of sin, and in the girding on of all manner of excellence, and holiness, and loveliness, for therein will lie our likeness to Christ. Oh, that God would give us more and more of this Christ-likeness!

**4, 5.** *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins;*

Not to let us live in them at ease, not to make sin become a pardonable matter, so that we might indulge in it, and yet hope to escape from its consequences. Oh, no! "He was manifested to take away our sins."

**5.** *And in him is no sin.*

Whatever he does, it does not contribute to sin, but is the deadly antagonist of sin,

**6.** *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

The man who dwells in Christ is the holy man; but the man who lives in sin is no child of God, for he proves by his evil conduct that he has no vital union with Christ. The fruit of Christianity is holiness; and if thy life be a sinful one, if that be the main run and tenor of thy life, thou art none of his.

**7.** *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

He is practically righteous, he is truly righteous; but let no man talk about being righteous before God while he is willfully indulging in sin. This cannot be; thou must be divorced from sin, or thou canst not be married to Christ. The gospel demands and also creates holiness of character; and wherever it works effectively upon the heart and conscience, it produces purity in the life.

**8.** *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

He did not come to make us easy while under the devil's sway, but to fetch us out from the tyrant's dominion, and lead us to live a godly, sober, righteous, pure life unto his praise and glory.

**9.** *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;*

That is to say, he does not live in it, it is not the tenor of his life. He is not outwardly so that others could convict him of it, or inwardly so that his own conscience could chide him with it, a man who loves sin.

**9.** *For his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God.*

Immortal principles forbid the child of God to sin; the new-born life within us keeps us holy. We have our imperfections and infirmities over which we mourn; but no child of God can live in sin, and love it. He hates it; he is like a sheep that may fall into the mire, but he will not wallow in it, as the swine do. As soon as possible, he is up again out of the mud and the filth. He goes sorrowing, with broken bones, when he perceives that he has grieved his God. His life as a whole is a holy life.

**10.** *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*

An unlovely spirit is also self-condemnatory as being an unholy spirit; in fact, want of love is want of righteousness. There are some who profess to be so righteous that they condemn everybody else, and they have no bowels of compassion for those who are suffering in consequence of their fault. But oh, beloved, it is one thing to hate sin, and it is another thing to hate the sinner! Let your indignation burn against everything that is evil; but still, towards him who has done the wrong have ever the gentle thought of pity, and for him present the prayer that he may leave his sin, and turn unto his gracious God. It may be difficult to reach this point; but there should always be just that happy mixture in the mind and heart of the child of God, — love to the sinner and hatred of his sin.

**11, 12.** *For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

And there is no hate like that, — the hate of a bad man towards a good one, not for doing him any wrong, but simply for rebuking him by the silent eloquence of his holy life. Men who love sin cannot endure the sight of virtue; and if they cannot kill the good man, they will try to kill his reputation. They sneer, and say, “Ah, he is as bad as others, no doubt, if you could only find him out!” That is exactly the spirit of Cain, “who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.”

**13-17.** *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

Perhaps he will do it on what he calls "principle." He thinks it is wrong to help his needy brother, so he says; but however he may put it, the Holy Spirit asks this searching question, "Whose hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

**18, 19.** *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.*

Full assurance comes very much this way, by a practical carrying out of the law of love.

**20.** *For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.*

Which we do not; and, therefore, our condemnation can never be so heavy as the condemnation which God will bring upon us. Let the man, whose own conscience accuses him, question himself as to how he will stand in the presence of the all-seeing God.

**21.** *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.*

If we can feel in our own bosoms that, by divine grace, we have been led to be honest, and upright, and true, before the Lord, "then have we confidence toward God."

**22.** *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

Notice those conditions of answered prayer; we cannot expect God to grant us our wishes if we do not conform to his will. Holiness has a great deal to do with power in prayer. It is not every man who prays who shall have whatever he asks for; but it is put so

here, and it is notable that it is so put, “Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” This is not mere legality, this is not a matter of work-mongering. When we become God’s children, he treats us as a father treats his child. You know what you do with a boy who is disobedient; he asks you for something that he wants, and you say, “No, I cannot grant you that; your conduct is such that I cannot let you have the pleasures that otherwise I would be pleased to give you.” But you have another boy, who is very careful in all things to do his father’s will; and you have marked the anxiety of his heart to be obedient to you, and you say, “Yes, my dear child, you may have whatever you want. I know that you would not have asked for it if you had not thought that it would be agreeable to my mind; and as you have asked that which is suitable for me to give, you may have it, and I am glad to give it to you.” So is it in the fatherly discipline of the house of God; if we do those things which are pleasing in his sight, we shall have power to prevail with him in prayer.

**23, 24.** *And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.*

That is a great mystery, for us to dwell in God, and for God to dwell in us. It is even so, but only he who knows it can understand it. Experience alone can explain our dwelling in God and God dwelling in us.

**24.** *And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

Holy Spirit, dwell in me, and teach me the meaning of this precious Word, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

### **1 JOHN 3**

**1.** *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:*

Behold it, wonder at it, and never cease to admire it. Is it not one of the greatest marvels that even God himself has ever wrought that we should be called the sons of God?

**1.** *Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

It does not know the Father, then how should it know the children? It did not know the elder Brother, — the firstborn among many brethren, — and as it did not know him, how should it know us?

*2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

And that vision will be transforming and transfiguring. The pure in heart see God, and they are pure because they see God. There is both action and reaction, when God has purified us we shall see Christ and when we see Christ as he is, our purification will be complete. When will that day arrive? Oh, for the blessed vision! Meanwhile, let us be content to look at him by faith, and to be ever growing more and more prepared for that brighter vision which is yet to be ours.

*3. And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.*

It is the nature of this divine hope, — this hope of being like Christ — that it helps us to grow day by day more like him; and so we purify ourselves, as Christ is pure.

*4. Whoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

And there will never be a better definition of sin than this. However men may philosophically try to mar it, this simple statement will be better than any that they can give us: “Sin is the transgression of the law.”

*5. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

What a marvellous thing it was for Christ to bear sin as he did, and yet to have upon him or within him no taint arising from it. You have to go into the world, and you say, “How can we help sinning while we have to mix with so much that is evil?” Well, the Lord Jesus Christ had to mix with evil more than you will ever have to do, for he not only lived in this sinful world, but the transgression of his people was actually laid upon him, so that he came into very close contact with sin: “He was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”

**6.** *Whoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

If this declaration related to any one act of sin, none of us could ever say that we have seen or known him, but it relates to the habit of sin, — if we love sin, and live in sin, if the main course of our life is sinful, then we have “not seen him, neither known him.”

**7.** *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

You must judge a tree by its fruit; if it brings forth good fruit, it is a good tree, and if it brings forth evil fruit, it is an evil tree. Do not be deceived about that matter, for there have been some, who have dreamed of being righteous, and of being the children of God, yet they have lived in sin as others do. They have been self-deceived; it has been a mere dream on which they have relied. Practical godliness is absolutely needful to a true Christian character, and a man is not righteous unless he does that which is righteous.

**8.** *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.*

Ever since he became a devil, he has continued to sin. It was sin that changed the angel into a devil, and a sinner he has always remained.

**8, 9.** *For the purpose the Son of God was manifested; that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin;*

That is to say, this is not the course, and habit, and tenour of his life; there is sin in much that he does, but he hates it, loathes it, and flees from it.

**9-11.** *For his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil, whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.*

Love is the essential mark of the true child of God. “God is love;” and, therefore, he that is born of God must love. Hatred, envy, malice, uncharitableness, — these are not the things to be

found in the children of God; if they are found in you, you are not one of his children.

**12.** *Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

That was the real evil at the bottom of his great crime; it was the wickedness of Cain's character that made him hate the good that was in Abel; and, therefore, after a while, he slew his brother, "because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

**13.** *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

This hatred is too old for you to wonder at it. If it began with the first man who was born into the world, even with Cain, do not marvel if it should spend some of its fury upon you.

**14, 15.** *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

What a warning this is against the evil spirit of hate, revenge, and all that kind of feeling! These things are not compatible with the possession of the life of God. Where hatred lives, there is no life of God in the soul. That evil must be shot to the very heart, by the arrows of almighty grace, or else we are not free from the dominion of the devil. Every man who hates another has the venom of murder in his veins. He may never actually take the deadly weapons into his hand and destroy life; but if he wishes that his brother were out of the way, if he would be glad if no such person existed, that feeling amounts to murder in the judgment of God. It is not the lifting of the dagger, nor the mixing of the poison, that is the essence of the grime of murder, it is the hate that prompts the commission of the deadly deed; so, if we never commit the crime, yet, if the hate be in our heart, we are guilty of murder in the sight of God, and eternal life cannot be abiding in us.

**16, 17.** *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whose hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

Indeed, it cannot be there at all; he has the love of himself, and not the love of God, dwelling in him.

**18, 19.** *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.*

You notice how the apostle constantly writes about knowing. Take your pencil, and underline the word “know” in John’s Epistles, and you will be surprised to find how frequently he uses it. He is not one of those who suppose, or fancy, or imagine, or have formed a certain hypothesis; but he knows, and he tells us what he knows, in order that we also may know. Love hath a knowledge which is peculiarly her own, — a full assurance which none can take from her.

**20.** *For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.*

If you, with your narrow knowledge of right and wrong, — your imperfect understanding of your own motives, — if you find reason to condemn yourself, what must be your position before the bar of the all-seeing, heart-reading God? That little flutter in thy bosom, my friend, that trembling, that uneasiness, what means it? It not this a forewarning of the sounding of the trumpet of the great assize, when thou wilt have to stand before the Judge of all the earth, and answer for thyself to him? It is easy to deceive thy fellow-man, but it is impossible to deceive thy God.

**21.** *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.*

Other people may condemn us, but that does not matter; they may impute to us wrong motives, and misrepresent us, but that is no concern of ours so long as we have confidence toward God.

**22.** *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

Notice the link between confidence as to our rightness and power in prayer. When a child has done wrong, and knows it, he cannot run to his father, and ask for favors as he used to do; he feels timid in his father’s presence because of the sense of his guilt. But if you and I know that we have endeavored with all our heart to love the Lord and our fellow-men and to act righteously in all things, we

have a saved confidence which enables us to speak with God as a man speaketh with his friend; and this kind of confidence God greatly loves and he listens to those who possess it. Such people may ask what they will of God; they have learned to bring their minds into conformity with the will of God's, so the desire of their heart shall be granted to them.

**23, 24.** *And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

Oh, to be more and more under the saved influence of that blessed Spirit!

### **1 JOHN 3:10-24**

**10-12.** *In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

Some people try to deceive us with the notion that all men are the children of God; but John, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, shows how false that idea is. Holiness and love distinguish the children of God from the children of the devil.

**13.** *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

As Cain hated Abel, so worldlings hate the saints, whose holiness is a continual rebuke to the ungodly.

**14-16.** *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Such self-sacrifice as this is the

very highest form of love to the brethren, and is a following of the example of Christ, who “laid down his life for us.”

**17, 18.** *But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*

Love that consists only of words is utterly worthless, if it is true love, it must prove itself by kind deeds and gracious actions.

**19.** *And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.*

The love that will pass this test will bring a restful assurance of peace to the heart.

**20-22.** *For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments. And do these things that are pleasing in his sight.*

It is not everyone who can have whatever he chooses to ask of God in prayer. This privilege is only granted to those who “keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”

**23.** *And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.*

Faith and love-faith in Christ, and love to one another,-are here most happily joined together; let us never put them asunder.

**24.** *And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

Though this great truth of our dwelling in God, and God dwelling in us, is a great mystery, it is a mystery concerning which we need not be in doubt if we will learn of the Holy Spirit what he delights to teach us.

## **1 JOHN 4**

**1.** *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

If John had need to say that in the early morning of Christianity, I am sure we ought to say it with greater emphasis today. It is certainly true in these days that “many false prophets are gone out into the world,” therefore we also must “try the spirits whether they are of God.”

*2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*

If the doctrine of the incarnation of God in Christ is denied, as it was by the first heretics, we may conclude that the Spirit of God is not in such teaching. Any doctrine which dishonours Christ,-whether in his person, or his offices, or his atonement, or in any other way,-you may at once conclude is not of God, for that which comes from the Spirit of God glorifies Christ. Did not our Lord himself say, concerning the Holy Spirit, “He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall skew it unto you”?

*3. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

The devil is up early at his evil work; we may sleep, but he never does.

This is that spirit of antichrist, whereof “ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

*4. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them:*

How? By argument? No; but-

*4. Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

If God’s own Spirit be in you, ye need not fear any of these enemies “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” If it were a conflict between you and others who had the Spirit of God within them, the conflict would be grievous, and the issue of it would be doubtful; but now that the struggle is between the Spirit of God who is in you and the spirit of error that is in the world, you need have no question about the ultimate result of the battle.

*5, 6. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*

If apostolic teaching be denied, those who deny it are not of God, for the Spirit of God was in the apostles, as he is also in all the Lord's true children. By this test we may try many of the spirits of the present day: "He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." The apostle now gives us another infallible test by which we may "try the spirits."

**7, 8.** *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

Where there is the spirit of enmity, of envy, of pride, of contention, there is not the Spirit of God. That which makes towards love, we may depend upon it came forth from love; but that which makes towards division, contention, emulation, and strife, is not of God, "for God is love."

**9-12.** *in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that some might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

We cannot see God, but we can love God; and love, therefore, takes the place of eyes to us. When we love God, it is because he dwells in us. That is better than seeing him, -to have him resident within our spirit, although he is not discernible by these mortal eyes.

**13-16.** *Hereby know see that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And 'we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

These words are very simple, but the lesson they convey is a very deep one. Most of them are monosyllables; but, oh, what marvels of meaning the Holy Spirit enabled the apostle John to put into them!

**17, 18.** *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are 'we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment.*

That is a servile fear, of course, for there is a fear which has no torment in it, that holy fear which even angels feel when they veil their faces in the presence of the Most high. There is no torment in that reverent awe; and the more we have of love towards God, the more of that filial fear shall we have; but that slavish dread, that awful terror which begets within itself dislike, cannot live where true love is planted within the soul: "Perfect love casteth out fear."

**18-20.** *He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen*

God looked upon us with an eye that saw all our sin and misery, yet he loved us; and he wants us to have a love which, while it sees all the imperfection and all the undesert in our fellow men, yet loves them notwithstanding all. If we do not love those whom we see, the apostle says that we do but lie when we talk of loving God whom we have not seen.

**21.** *And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

Now let us read what another apostle has to say, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, upon this subject of Christian love. Turn to Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, the fourth chapter.

This exposition consisted of readings from 1 JOHN 4 AND PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9.

## **1 JOHN 4**

**1.** *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirit whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

This is an unction of which there is great need in the present day, when so many accept anything that they hear from a "priest" or from a pastor without searching the Scriptures to see whether what they hear is in accordance with the inspired Word.

**2.** *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.*

Some say that Jesus Christ was not God, others say that he was not man, while some talk as if everything about him was a mystery; but they who are truly sent by God declare plainly that Jesus Christ did literally come in the flesh, and such teachers are “of God.”

*3. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

That was the form that antichrist took in John’s day. It is constantly taking different forms, but it is always anti-Christ,-against Christ.

*4. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them:*

If you have a childlike spirit, if God has made you teachable as little children, and his Spirit dwells within you, you will not be overcome by these false prophets, but you will overcome them.

*4. Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

They may dupe the world, but they shall not dupe you. If it were possible,

they would deceive the very elect, but that is not possible.

*5. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.*

They are the world’s prophets, they preach the world’s doctrines, they flatter the world, and the world likes that, so “the world heareth them.”

*6. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us, he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*

They who accept the apostolic teaching prove that they are “of God.” There are some nowadays who say, “We accept the teaching of the Gospels, but we will have nothing to do with the apostles and their Epistles;” thus they clearly show that they are not of God, for John says, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit “He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us.”

*7. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

He who has the spirit of love within him “is born of God,” “for love is of God.” He who constantly seeks the good of others, he

whose heart beats with love to those who are not within the narrow confines of his own ribs, he whose love goes forth to God and his people, and to the sons of men in general,-this is the man who “is born of God, and knoweth God.”

**8.** *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

He may be very orthodox, but if he does not love, he does not know God, and if he does not know God, what does he know? There is such a thing as holding the truth in bitterness, but those who know God, and are truly his children, hold the truth in love.

**9.** *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.*

That was the highest possible proof of love that even God could give us.

**10, 11.** *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

As God “so loved us” when there was nothing lovable about us, and so loved us as to give his only-begotten Son to save us, “we ought also to love one another.”

**12-14.** *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*

John could testify as an eye-witness to the sufferings and death of Christ, for he stood at the foot of the cross, and saw the Saviour die, and he had aforetime laid his head upon his Master’s breast. He knew that Christ was real flesh and blood, and he knew that Christ really died, so he could truly say, “We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.”

**15, 16.** *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

This is a deep Book. The words are very simple and plain,-mainly monosyllables, yet who among us can ever fathom the depth

of this Epistle? May we fathom it so far as to plunge into its wondrous depths!

**17, 18.** *Wherein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment.*

He that feareth is not made perfect in love. Questioning, mistrust, unbelief, doubt,-all these die when we come truly and heartily to love our Lord; and in proportion as our love to him burns like a flame of fire, it burns up all this wood, hay, and stubble of trembling, slavish fear.

**19.** *We love him, because he first loved us.*

We never should have loved him unless he had “first loved us.” His love to us begat our love to him.

**20.** *If man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar:-John is very emphatic in his condemnation of such a man as that.*

Some of the most tender-hearted men in the world are the most blunt in their mode of speaking; and some of the most fawning flatterers are the most cruel in their hearts. We love John all the better because he writes so plainly, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar:” —

**20.** *For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

Why, sir, if you could see God, it is clear that you would not love him. If you talk about your love to him whom you have not seen, it is utterly false if you do not love men like yourself whom you have seen.

**21.** *And this commandment have we from him,-*

That is, from the Lord Jesus, who again and again gave this commandment to his disciples,-

**21.** *That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

O lovers of God, prove the reality of your affection for him by the genuineness of your love to your fellow-men!

This exposition consisted of readings from ACTS 25. AND 26; AND 1 JOHN 4.

## 1 JOHN 4

**1.** *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

It was so in John's day: it is so in these days. If there were only one false prophet, we should have need to be on our guard, but "many false prophets are gone out into the world." If false prophets were all shut up in a cage, and we had to go to seek them, there might be some danger to be apprehended from them, but there is so much more danger now that we can truly read, "Many false prophets are gone out into the world."

**2.** *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*

Where the Godhead and the manhood of Christ are truly and properly confessed, so far, at any rate, the confession is of God.

**3.** *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

So that there were deadly errors very early in the history of the Christian Church. The loving apostle John did not handle them with gloved hands, but he dealt with them honestly and sought to destroy them. We must not wonder if, in our days, the church has many heresies in it; but they are not to be tolerated, but to be cut up, root and branch.

**4.** *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

The people of God are few, feeble, and weak; but there is a Spirit in them mightier than the spirit of the world; and, as the ultimate victory will depend upon the strength of the indwelling Spirit, the Church of God will yet overcome the world that lieth in the wicked one.

**6.** *They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.*

These false prophets teach doctrines that suit carnal men: "They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world." They take their cue from "the spirit of the age." They speak according to the fashion

of the world, and therefore it is no wonder that the world heareth them.

**6.** *We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us.*

Here is an inspired answer to those who say that they attach no importance to the apostles. They profess to be the followers of Christ, but they say that they do not agree with Paul and with John. Very well; John speaks in the name of all the apostles when he says, "He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us."

**6.** *Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*

If you reject any part of the Word of God, the spirit of error is within you. Truth is one, and the revelation of God is one, let us not rend it, let us hold fast by it all, and so prove that the Spirit of truth is in us.

**7.** *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

The spirit of love, kindness, self-sacrifice, holy charity, — this is of God. This is the distinguishing mark of the Christian dispensation, the distinguishing mark of the Christian, that he abounds in love, not in malice, anger, revenge, bitterness "Let us love one another: for love is of God."

**8.** *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

I have known men, professing to be Christians, at enmity with their brothers. I have heard of a father and a son who have not spoken to one another for months. Did I hear of a mother and a daughter who would not speak to each other, and of sisters who had fallen out? This will not do; you must either give up your Christian profession or give up your hatred. The very attempt to combine enmity and Christianity is a sin against God: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

**9-10.** *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

Sometimes people say, "How can we love a person who is not lovable, one who will not love us in return?" Yet God did so, he

loved us when we loved him not, he loved us when there was nothing lovable in us; and we ought to take God as our Pattern in all things.

**11-12.** *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

Though we cannot see God, yet if we love one another that is a proof that we have him dwelling within us.

**13-16.** *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.*

The two things go together, knowing and believing.

**16-18.** *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.*

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth off fear: There is no slavish dread, no spirit of bondage; perfect love casts it all out. May we all have that love, and get rid of all fear!

**18-20.** *Because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him because he first loved us. If a man says I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar:*

That is very plain language. John does not mince matters; he is all love, but he is also all truth. Some people think that, if you love, you will never use strong language; but that is not the case. Sometimes, because a Surgeon loves the patient, he cuts the more deeply.

**20, 21.** *For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

Now I do not know to whom this message may specially apply in all this great congregation; but there is the Word of God as plain as a pike-staff. If you do not live in love, you do not live in God; and if any of you are harbouring any animosities, ill-feelings, and

unkindnesses, get rid of them, get rid of them at once. The sun has well nigh gone down; remember the apostle Paul's injunction, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath," but, as God has forgiven you, forgive all others for Christ's sake, and dwell in a loving-hearted Christ-like spirit toward all mankind.

## **1 JOHN 4**

**1.** *Beloved, believe not every spirit, —*

A simpleton believes every word that he hears, but "the wise man's eyes are in his head," so he examines what he sees and hears, and does not blindly accept whatever may be told to him. So John says, "Believe not every spirit," —

**1-3.** *But try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God:*

Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: If there is any question raised about the Deity and the humanity of Christ, do not listen any longer. When you taste the first morsel of meat from a joint, and you find that it is tainted, there is no necessity for you to eat all the rest to see if it is good; and if any man questions the true Divinity and the real humanity of Christ, have nothing to do with him, and give no heed to what he says, for he "is not of God."

**3, 4.** *And this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children,*

Ye who are trusting in Jesus, and are born again of his Spirit, though you may have only a small influence with others, and are but as little children in your own esteem, yet "ye are of God."

**4.** *And have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

There are two spirits; the Holy Spirit dwells in believers, and the evil spirit dwells in the ungodly. But the Holy Spirit is stronger than the evil spirit, and will certainly overcome him.

**5.** *They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.*

When people say to you, “Everybody says so-and-so,” that is not the reason why you should believe it. “All the men of advanced thought, — all the scholars of the age, speak thus;” yes, just so: “They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.”

**6.** *We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us.*

The apostles spake as men sent from God, for the Spirit of God dwelt in them; and they alone know the truth who keep to that which has been revealed to us through his holy apostles and prophets.

**6, 7.** *Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

From the abundance of love which was in John’s heart, we might almost be startled at the very strong things that he writes against those who are in error, did we not remember that it is only a false charity which winks at error. He is the most loving man who has honesty enough to tell the truth, and to speak out boldly against falsehood. It is very easy to pass through this world believing and saying that everybody is right. That is the way to make a soft path for your own feet, and to show that you only have love to yourself; but sometimes to speak as John the Baptist spoke, or as Martin Luther spoke, is the way to prove that you have true love to others.

**8-10.** *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

By nature, we had no love to God; we were his enemies. We loved sin, and we had ruined ourselves by it; but God took out of his own bosom the only Son he had, that he might make reconciliation for us, and put away our sin. “Herein is love,” says the apostle, as though you could find it nowhere else as it is here. Here is the height and depth of love immeasurable; here is love summed up, here is love’s climax: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

**11.** *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

If such was his great kindness toward us that he denied himself his own Son for our sake, ought we not to be kindly affectioned one toward another?

**12.** *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

“God dwelleth in us” though we do not see him. The nearest approach we can have to God is by this golden way of love.

**13, 14.** *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*

John is speaking for himself and the rest of the apostles; for they were eye-witnesses who had seen Christ, and therefore could testify to him.

**15, 16.** *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

Is there anyone here who is full of anger, enmity, malice, and envy? If so, let him know that God dwells not in the heart that harbors such abominations. Until these base passions are expelled, and we feel love to all mankind for Christ’s sake, God is not in us, for “he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” The old method, according to Jewish tradition, was, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy;” but Christ’s new rule is, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.” This is the point in which our likeness to God will be seen, for he loved us when we were his enemies, and he expects his children to love their enemies; may he graciously teach us that sacred art!

**17.** *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.*

If we can be to the world, in our poor feeble measure, what God is to it, —fountains of love, dispensaries of goodness, — then we need not be afraid of the verdict even of the great day of judgment.

**18.** *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear:*

If a man is conscious that he intends no harm to anyone, that he wishes good to all mankind, that he loves his God, and loves his fellowmen for God's sake, what has he to fear? He becomes the bravest of the brave, and often finds himself safe and unharmed in places where others dare not go.

**18-20.** *Because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar:*

John! John! John! This is a very strong expression. Did we not always understand that John was full of affection? Yes, but he was not one of those oily, sugary sort of people who cannot speak the truth. There is no real love in that kind of man; he has only the mere pretense of love. John speaks sharply because he loves ardently. True love hates that which is unlovely. It is inevitable that a man, who is full of love, should feel intense indignation against that which is contrary to love. Hence the apostle says, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar."

**20, 21.** *For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

And the word "brother" is to be understood in the widest possible sense. We are all brothers, springing from the same common parent; and therefore we ought to be philanthropists, lovers of man, loving even the guilty and the worthless, having an earnest desire to do good even to those who do us ill. If we have not yet reached that spirit, we had need begin our true Christian life, at the foot of the cross, by trusting and loving him who there died out of love for sinners; for there only can we learn, in the person of Christ Jesus our Lord, this divine philosophy of love to God and men.

## **1 JOHN 4:9-21**

**9.** *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

There is love in our creation; there is love in providence; but most of all there is love in the gift of Christ for our redemption. The apostle here seems to say, "Now that I have found the great secret of

God's love to us; here is the clearest evidence of divine love that ever was or ever can be manifested toward the sons of men."

**10.** *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

In us there was no love; there was a hatred of God and goodness. The enmity was not on God's side toward us; but on our side toward him. "He loved us and sent his son." The gift of Christ; the needful propitiation for our sins, was all of love on God's part. Justice demanded the propitiation, but love applied it. God could not be just if he pardoned sin without atonement; but the greatness of the love is seen in the fact that it moved the Father to give his Son to an ignominious death, that he might pardon sinners and yet be just.

**11.** *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

Here we have a fact and an argument. We ought to love. We ought to love after God's fashion; not because men loved us. Nor because they deserve anything at our hands. We are too apt to look at the worthiness of those whom we help; but our God is gracious to the unthankful and to the evil.

He makes his sun to rise and rain to fall for the unjust as well as for the righteous, therefore we ought to love the unlovely and the unloving. But just as God has a special love for his own people, we who believe in him ought to have a peculiar affection for all who are his.

**12.** *No man hath seen God at any time.*

We do not need to see him to love him. Love knows how good he is, though she hath not beheld him. Blessed are they who have not seen God, yet who love him with heart, and mind, and strength.

**12.** *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

He is not far to seek. If you love one another, God is in you; he dwells in you, he is your nearest and dearest Friend, the Author of all other love. The grace of love comes from the God of love.

**13.** *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

And his Spirit is the spirit of love. Wherever it comes, it makes man love his fellow man and seek his good; and if you have that love in your heart, it came from God, and you dwell in God.

**14. *And we have seen.***

Yes, there is something that we have seen. John writes for himself and his fellow apostles, and he says, “No man hath seen God at any time,” but —

**14. *We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.***

John saw him live, and saw him die, and saw him when he had risen from the dead, and saw him as he ascended. So he speaks to the matter of eyesight, and bears testimony that, though we have not seen God, we have, in the person of the representative apostles, seen the Son of God who lived and laboured and died for us.

**15. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.***

Let Christ be God to you, and you are saved. If, in every deed, and of a truth. You take him to be the Son of God, and consequently rest your eternal hopes on him, God dwells in you, and you dwell in God.

**16. *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.***

How far is this true of all of you? How many here can join with the beloved apostle, and say, “We have known and believed the love that God hath to us”? We know it; we have felt it; we are under its power. We know it still, it remains a matter of faith to us; we believe it. We have a double hold of it. “We know,” we are not agnostics. “We believe,” we are not unbelievers.

**16. *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.***

This is not mere benevolence; there are many benevolent people who still do not dwell in love. They wish well to their fellow men; but not to all. They are full of indignation at certain men for the wrong that they have done them. John’s words teach us that there is a way of living in which you are in accord with God, and with all mankind; you have passed out of the region of enmity into the realm of love. When you have come there, by the grace of God, then God dwells in you, and you dwell in him.

**17. *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have a boldness in the day of judgment:***

That is a wonderful expression, “boldness in the day of judgment.” According to some, the saints will not be in the day of judgment. Then, what is the use of “boldness in the day of judgment”? As I read my Bible, we shall all be there, and we shall all give an account unto God. I shall be glad to be there, to be judged for the deeds done in my body; not that I hope to be saved by them, but because I shall have a perfect answer to all accusations on account of my sin. “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” If I am a believer in Christ, —

“Bold shall I stand in that grand day,  
For who aught to my charge shall lay?  
While through thy blood absolved I am From sin’s tremendous  
curse and shame.”

Because as he is, so are we in this world.

Happy Christian men, who can say that? If you live among men as Christ lived among men, if you are a Saviour to them in your measure, if you love them, if you try to exhibit the lovely traits of character that were in Christ, happy are you.

**18.** *There is no fear in love;*

When a man loves with a perfect love, he escapes from bondage.

**18.** *But perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

There is a loving, holy fear, which is never cast out. Filial fear grows as love grows. That sacred dread, that solemn awe of God, we must ever cultivate; but we are not afraid of him. Dear heart, God is your best Friend, your choicest love. “Yea, mine own God is he,” you can say; and you have no fear of him now. You long to approach him. Though he is a consuming fire, you know that he will only consume what you want to have consumed; and will purify you, and make your gold to shine more brightly because the consumable alloy is gone from it. He will not consume you, but only that which would work for your hurt if it were left within you. Refining fire, go through my heart! Consume as thou wilt! I long to have sin consumed, that I may be like my God. Say you not so, my brethren?

**19.** *We love him, because he first loved us.*

The reason for our love is found in free grace. God first loved us, and now we must love him; we cannot help it. It sometimes seems too much for a poor sinner to talk about loving God. If an emmet or a snail were to say that it loved a queen, you would think it strange, that it should look so high for an object of affection; but there is no distance between an insect and a man compared with the distance between man and God. Yet love doth fling a flying bridge from our manhood up to his Godhead. "We love him, because he first loved us." If he could come down to us, we can go up to him. If his love could come down to such unworthy creatures as we are, then our poor love can find wings with which to mount up to him.

**20.** *If a man say, I love God.*

Not, "if a man love God," but if a man say, "I love God." It is a blessed thing to be able to say, "I love God," when God himself can bear witness to the truth of our statement; but the apostle says, If a man say, I love God, —

**20.** *And hateth his brother, he is a liar:*

It is very rude of you, John, to call people liars. But it is not John's rough nature that uses such strong language; it is his gentle nature. When a loving disposition turns its face against evil, it turns against it with great vehemence of holy indignation. You can never judge a man's character by his books. Curiously enough, Mr. Romaine. Of St. Anne's Church, Blackfriars, wrote the most loving books that could be; yet he was a man of very strong temper indeed. Mr. Toplady wrote some of the sharpest things that were ever said about Arminians; but he was the most loving and gentle young man that ever breathed. St. John, full of love and tenderness, hits terribly hard when he comes across a lie. He was so fond of love, that he cannot have it played with, or mocked or mimicked. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar."

**21.** *For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

This is that "new commandment" which our Lord gave to his apostles, and through them to his whole church. "That ye love one another as I have loved you." John was, in a special sense, "that disciple whom Jesus loved." It was meet, therefore, that he should be the apostle to be inspired by the Holy Spirit to bring "this

commandment” to the remembrance of any who had forgotten it. “This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” God help us so to do, of his great grace!

Amen.

## **1 JOHN 5**

**1.** *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God:*

These are very simple words, but they contain a great depth of meaning. The teaching conveyed by this Epistle is very profound, though the language is such as even a child can understand. There must be faith in Jesus Christ as the anointed Son of God; otherwise, there is no new birth, no regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

**1.** *And every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.*

If we love the Father, we love the Son. If we love God, we love all his people; all who are born into the divine family are the objects of our affection.

**2, 3.** *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments:*

Not that we talk about our experience; not, that we use endearing expressions concerning the Saviour; not, that we are attentive to outward religious ordinances; but “this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.” A holy life is the best possible proof of true love to God.

**3.** *And his commandments are not grievous.*

To his people, they are charming; not grievous. They delight themselves in the law of God; and they only wish that they could be perfectly conformed to the divine will.

**4.** *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

And the apostle gives a description of what kind of faith it is that overcometh the world.

**5.** *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

So that, it is faith in Jesus which is, first of all, the evidence of the new birth, and which is, afterwards, the weapon wielded by the

new-born soul, with which it fights till it gains the victory over the world.

**6.** *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only,—*

Cleansing us as to our lives: “not by water only,”—

**6.** *But by water and blood.*

The blood which takes away the guilt of our offences. There is a double cure for us in Christ Jesus our Lord; first, the putting away of all our past guilt; and, then, the delivering of our hearts from defilement, so that we live after a holy fashion.

**6, 7.** *And if it the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.*

For there are three that bear record in heaven,—Or, “witness in heaven,”—

**7, 8.** *The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*

Blessed is the man who has that threefold witness,—the Spirit of God quickening him, the water cleansing his daily life, and the blood delivering his conscience from trouble, because he is delivered from sin by the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

**9.** *If we receive the witness of men,—*

And we are constantly obliged to do that, for we could not get on at all if we did not believe Our fellow men; yet—

**9-12.** *The witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and that life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life, Ah, then, my soul, if thou hast, by faith, embraced the Son of God, thou hast a life which can never die! Thou hast the life of God within thee; thou hast heaven begun within thee; and thou hast it now. Dear hearer, hast thou the Son of God? Hast thou taken him to thyself by a distinct believing grasp, saying, “This Christ shall be mine,—this blessed Jesus shall be my Saviour”?* Then, you have the apostle’s inspired declaration,

*“He that hath the Son hath life;” and his other declaration is equally true, “He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*

**13.** *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

The apostle said that they did believe, yet he wrote to them that they might believe on the name of the Son of God; because, he that believeth needs to believe more,—more as to matter, and more as to the firmness of the grip of his faith. There are some who do really believe on Christ who do not know that they have eternal life. They have it, but they scarcely realize that they have it; they are afraid to believe that it is theirs. But, here, the Holy Ghost assures us, through the apostle, that those who believe on the name of the Son of God have eternal life. Oh, what a comfort this is! Then, you can never perish. There are some who say that you can fall from grace; but how can that be? What kind of life would that be? It would be temporary life. But the Scripture saith, He that believeth On the Son hath everlasting life.” Then, if it be everlasting, it is everlasting, and there cannot be any end to it. Our Lord Jesus Christ said to the woman at the well of Sychar, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

**14.** *And this is the confidence that, we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us:*

We do not wish to have a more unlimited promise than that; we do not ask God to hear our prayer if it is not according to his will. The true child of God does not wish to have his own will; but he says, “No, Lord; thou knowest much better than I do what to grant; so, when my will is contrary to thy will, thy will, not mine, be done! This is as gracious an assurance of answers to prayer as the true children of God wish to have: If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.”

**15.** *And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

That is, before we actually receive the answers to our petitions. After the prayer of faith, we know that our request has been granted, and we act upon the belief that we have already received what we asked of God. A true man’s promise is as good as the performance

of it; we unhesitatingly take a note of hand, or a promise to pay, when we know that it is drawn upon a reliable firm. We treat it as money; it passes from hand to hand, through the bankers, and is regarded as if it were the coin itself;—then, shall we not treat our God in this fashion when we have his promise to pay or to give? We have pleaded it in prayer; so, let us rise from our knees, not merely hoping that we shall receive what we have asked, but believing that we shall surely have it: “If we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

**16, 17.** *If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.*

There, are multitudes of such sins; but there is a place, beyond which, if a man, passes in sin, he becomes henceforth dead, and utterly insensible; and he will never be quickened, and never be saved. If we knew a man to be in such a condition as that, the apostle’s words would apply to such a case. “I do not say that he shall pray for it” But, as we cannot tell that any man is in that condition, it is well for us to ask for grace to be able to pray for every sinner, however great his sin may be. We know that “all unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death:”

**18.** *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not;*

That is to say, that is not the bent and current of his life. He makes mistakes, and he falls into errors, and he sins; but that is not the habitual description of his life.

**18-21.** *But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we knew that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*

At the time of the Reformation, there was a general order that this text should be put round the communion tables. I think it is time that it was put round the communion tables again. “Little children, keep yourselves from idols;”—for that is one place where idols are often found, though not by any means the only one.

**21. Amen.**

And we say, "Amen; so let it be."

**1 JOHN 5**

**1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.***

Take comfort, believer, from that declaration. You have accepted Jesus as the Christ the anointed of God, so the apostle affirms that you are "born of God." It may be only lately that you have been born again, you may be only a babe in grace; but if you have a true faith in Christ as God's anointed, you are "born of God."

**1. *And every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.***

If you truly love God, you also love his well-beloved and only-begotten Son, and you also love all his children. There cannot be a true love to the Father and a hatred to his family, that is impossible. Judge therefore by this test whether you love God or not.

**2, 3. *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous.***

Love is a practical thing; love without obedience is a mere pretense. True love shows itself by seeking to please the one who is loved. May God the Holy Ghost work in us perfect obedience to the commands of God, that we may prove that we really do love him!

**4. *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.***

This is the conquering weapon; he who truly believes in Jesus cannot be overthrown by the combined forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Remember the lesson that Haman learned when he contended in vain against Mordecai because Mordecai was of the seed of the Jews, and learn that they who belong to Christ shall, like Christ be more than conquerors.

**5. *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus the Son of God?***

Let that truth be firmly fixed in your mind, and nerve you in your conflict with the world. The old cry, Athanasius contra mundum, "Athanasius against the world," may be uttered by every believer in Jesus into Christianus contra mundum." Who is he that

overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

**6, 7.** *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*

Thus all the Persons in the blessed Trinity confirm the faith of the Christian; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost bear united witness to the faith which God himself gives us.

**8.** *And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*

Three candles in the room, but the light is one, three witnesses to our heart, but the witness is the same. If we have the witness of the Spirit, the water, and the blood, we know that we have received the truth.

**9, 10.** *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself:*

What better witness than this could he have?

**10.** *Because he believeth not God hath made him a liar;"-*

He need not actually say that God is a liar; the fact that he does not believe him has practically made out that God is a liar. How many of us are there to whom this passage applies?" He that believeth not God hath made him a liar;"-

**10.** *Because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*

Is this true concerning anyone here! If so, perhaps if you have not been aware of the extent of your guilt. You have remained unbelievers out of sheer carelessness, out of neglect of the Word. I pray you, rest not in such a state of mind and heart now that you are informed by the Spirit of God that, by your unbelief, you are making God a liar. Who would willfully commit that great sin? Let us shudder at the thought of the bare possibility of such guilt as this.

**11.** *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

Our only hope lies in Christ; but there is life for Us in Christ and life eternal, if we do but believe in him.

**12.** *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

You exist, and you always will exist, but true life is not yours if you have not Christ as your Saviour. Life is something infinitely superior to mere existence: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

**13-15.** *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we knew that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

A very wonderful thing is prayer, yet it is not every man's prayer that is heard, but he that hath the life of God within him shall have his petitions granted because the Holy Spirit will move him to ask in accordance with the will of God.

**16-18.** *If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. We know that whatsoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

He who has committed the sin which is unto death have no desire for forgiveness, he will never repent, he will never seek faith in Christ but he will continue hardened and unbelieving; he will henceforth never be the subject of holy influences, for he has crossed over into that dark region of despair where hope and mercy never come. Perhaps some of you think that you have committed that unpardonable sin, and are at this moment grieving over it. If so, it is clear that you cannot have committed that sin, or else you could not grieve over it. If you have any fear concerning it, you have not committed that sin which is unto death, for even fear is a sign of life. Whoever repents of sin and trusts in Jesus Christ is freely and fully forgiven, therefore it is clear that he has not committed a sin

which will not be forgiven. There is much in this passage to make us prayerful and watchful, but there is nothing here to make a single troubled heart feel anything like despair. He that is born again, born from above, can never commit this unpardonable sin. He is kept from it; “that wicked one” cannot even touch him, for he is preserved by sovereign grace against this dreadful damage to his soul. You need not be curious to enquire what this unpardonable sin is. I will give you an old illustration of mine concerning it. You may sometimes have seen a notice put up on certain estates in the country, “Man-traps and spring guns set here,” but, if so, did you ever go round to the front door of the mansion, and say, “If you please will you tell me where the man-traps are, and whereabouts the spring guns are set?” If you had asked that question, the answer would have been, “It is the very purpose of this warning not to tell you where they are, for you have no business to trespass there at all.” So, “all unrighteousness is sin,” and you are warned to keep clear of it.” There is a sin unto death,” but you are not told what that sin is on purpose that you may, by the grace of God, keep clear of sin altogether.

**19-21.** *And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*

After the Reformation in England, there was a certain part of the church, called the rood-loft, where the crucifix had to be, and it was ordered by the Reformers, when “the holy rood” was taken away, that these words should be printed in capital letters in its place,-“LITTLE CHILDREN KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS.” This was an admirable arrangement, and this text might very profitably be put up in a good many Ritualistic churches now, instead of the Agnus Dei and the crucifix,-“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” Might we not also say to many a mother and many a father concerning their children, and to many a lover of money and hungerer after gold, “Keep yourselves from idols”? Idolatry will intrude itself in one form or another. Some idolize themselves; they look in the glass, and there see the face of their god. O beware of all

idolatry!” Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” We may very well say “Amen” to that.



# JUDE

## JUDE

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

Our holy faith breeds in us the best wishes for others. As we desire to find mercy ourselves, so do we long that others also should find mercy; and as we rejoice in the peace and love which the Holy Ghost works in us, we desire that others may partake of the same spiritual benefits. Hence the apostles usually begin their Epistles with these good wishes, which are not mere wishes, but earnest prayers and inspired benedictions. May we breathe such petitions wherever we go! Let us wish no man any ill, even in the most exacting and trying times, and under the greatest provocation; but still let us breathe out this prayer, "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied."

**3.** *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints.*

These godly men, though they wrote under divine inspiration, yet stirred themselves up that they might be in a right condition of mind and heart. Even though the pen does not by itself write, yet it is well that it be not corroded, lest it answer not to the hand that uses it; so Jude says, "I gave all diligence to write unto you." All the diligence of Jude by itself could not have written this Epistle; still, while depending upon divine guidance, he was no mere passive agent, but he gave all diligence to the accomplishment of his task. Jude wrote of "the common salvation", for there is but one. He was writing a general Epistle, a catholic Epistle, to all sorts of persons all over the world, and he therefore wrote of "the common salvation." There is but one salvation; there cannot be another. There are some who trouble us, as some troubled the Christians in the apostles' day,

by preaching “another gospel, which is not another,” but there is only one salvation. “It was needful,” says the apostle, “for me to write unto you;” and oh, how needful it is still to preach the gospel, and to warn men against defections from it! Jude continues, “It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all” (that is the correct rendering) “delivered to the saints.” The faith is not a growth, it is not an evolution, it was once for all delivered to the saints; and the great business of the saints, the holy, the saintly among men, is to defend, if necessary with their lives, the faith once delivered unto them. We are put in trust with the gospel, we are trustees of a divine deposit of invaluable truth; and we must be true to our trust at all costs. It was needful for Jude to write as he did, for he had further to say,-

*4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

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

*5. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the laud of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.*

So you may get in among the spiritual children of Israel, you may share their privileges, you may sing the Red Sea song of triumph; and yet, after all, if there is not real living faith within your soul, God will as surely destroy you as he destroyed the unbelieving Israelites. Those myriads of graves in the wilderness are as sure a token of God’s hatred of sin as the drowning of Pharaoh’s chariots and horsemen in the Red Sea. Beware, then, of having a form of faith which does not purify your lives, a profession of belief in Christ which even allows you to live in sin with impunity; for if you have this however near you may seem to be to the people of God,

even if you are counted in with them, yet God will not reckon you as his, for he is the same Lord who “afterward destroyed them that believed not.”

*6. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*

The angels think of how high they stood in their first estate. If sin could drag an angel from the skies, it may well pluck a minister from the pulpit, a deacon from the communion table, a church-member out of the midst of his brethren. It is only perseverance in holiness which is the token of eternal salvation; if we forsake the Lord, and turn back to our former evil ways, it will be the evidence that we never really believed in Christ, and that there was no true work of grace in our hearts.

*7. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

Whatever the new gods, newly come up, that some preach nowadays, may be or may not be, “our God is a consuming fire,” our God is one who takes vengeance upon iniquity, and who will by no means spare the guilty. He is as terribly just as he is divinely gracious; let us bow before him.

*8. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.*

What a strange thing it is that such evils should spring up in the nominal church of God! I suppose that, out of the professing church, there have come more monstrous evils than have been nursed in the world itself. Why, even in these days, we have had those who have professed perfection, who have given themselves over to abominable evils, and who have even taught them as a part of their perfection! Ah, me! To what depths of infamy will not men go! Under the very guise of holiness, the most loathsome iniquity has been practiced. Unless the grace of God prevent, that which is best rots into that which is worst. You could not make a devil except with an angel for the raw material; a Judas Iscariot could only be produced out of an apostle of Jesus Christ; and it was into the nominal church of God that these filthy dreamers of whom Jude

wrote had come. They were also, according to the apostle, those who “despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities,” those who cavil at everything that is right and good, and seek to pull down everything that comes to them with authority, especially everything that is of divine authority.

**9.** *Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.*

I do not know when that happened, yet I believe it, because it is here. When we are called to dispute, whether it be about the law, which might be regarded as the body of Moses, or about the gospel, which is the body of Christ,-let us use no railing accusations, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Let us be satisfied with hard arguments and soft words; and when we feel that our own rebuke will be useless, let us simply say, “The Lord rebuke thee.”

**10.** *But these speak evil of those things, which they know not:*

Very generally it is so; those who revile Holy Scripture are usually persons who have not read the Bible; they “speak evil of those things, which they know not.”

**10-12.** *But what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity,*

You seem to be sailing smoothly along over the placid waters, but these men are like hidden rocks,-that is the expression used by the apostle rather than “spots.”

**12.** *When they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear:*

At the love feasts in the apostles’ day, these ungodly men feasted without fear, just as some do at the communion table now. The absence of holy fear is a damning mark in the souls of unholy professors. That religion which has no awe in it, which never makes us tremble before the Most High, is not the religion of genuine faith, for there is a fear which even perfect love casteth not out, but it rather increases and deepens that holy fear which is the very essence of true piety.

**12, 13.** *Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*

Such were in the professing church in Jude's time, so we must not be surprised if we meet with men like them in the nominal church today.

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

When Enoch thus prophesied, we do not know. That he did so, was revealed to Jude, and he here tells us of it. It was profitable for us that so pointed and plain a testimony of Enoch should not be lost.

**16-18.** *These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.*

Jude gives a summary of warnings uttered by Paul, Peter, and James.

**19.** *These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*

They know nothing of the divine life, and of that Divine Spirit who dwells in the bodies of the saints as in a holy temple.

**20.** *But ye, beloved, building-*

Is this the way, then, to prevent our falling into sin? Yes. To prevent doing wrong, do right: "Ye, beloved, building"-doing good, substantial, solid work, building-

**20.** *Up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost!*

He has told us about the one foundation, now he bids us build thereon: "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith." "Praying." That is the next thing; there is no preservation like that which is given by God in response to believing prayer. "Praying in the Holy Ghost." There is a kind of praying which is without the Holy Ghost, and it speedeth not. There is a praying which is the breath of God in man, returning whence it came; this will keep us from falling, and bring us untold blessings.

**21.** *Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

While you thus carefully watch over yourselves, have great love also to others, and seek to bless them, especially your fellow church members.

**22.** *And of some have compassion, making a difference:*

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

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

Loving the sinners, but hating their sin.

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

The Lord bless the reading of his Word to our profit! Amen.

## **JUDE**

**1.** *Jude.*

That is to say Judas, not Iscariot, —

**1.** *The servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, —*

He does not say, "and brother of our Lord," for we know that James and Judas were both of them among the Lord's kinsman according to the flesh; but now, after the flesh, knoweth he even

Christ no more, but is content and happy to be known as “the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,” —

1. *To them that are sanctified by God the Father,*

For the decree of election, the setting apart of the chosen is usually ascribed unto God the Father.

1. *And preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:*

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

2. *Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.*

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

3. *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints.*

In the sense of being once for all given to the saints, the faith of Christians is not a variable quantity. It is not a thing which changes from day to day, as some seem to suppose, vainly imagining that fresh light is bestowed upon each new generation. No, the truth was delivered once for all, it was stereotyped, fixed; and it is for us to hold it fast as God has given it to us.

4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares, —*

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

4. *Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation,*

Proscribed by God as traitors long ago. Those who have not the courage of their convictions probably have no convictions at all, but seek to undermine the faith which they profess to hold.

4. *Ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and Our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Antinomians, “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,” falsely declaring that the law has no binding force upon the Christian’s life, and saying that we may do evil that good may come; — and Socinians, “denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

5. *I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.*

If we have no real faith, we may appear to go a long way towards heaven, but we shall not enter the heavenly Canaan.

6. *And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*

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

7, 8. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. They cast off all restraint; they claim to have liberty to do whatever they like; and when reprov’d, they utter railing words against those who honestly rebuke them.

9. *Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.*

To what does this refer? I am sure I do not know. I cannot think it refers to anything recorded in the Old Testament, but to some fact, known to Jude, who here speaks by revelation, and records it. We believe it, and learn from it that, when an archangel disputes with

the devil, he does not use hard words even against him, for hard words are an evidence of the weakness of the cause which they are used to support. Hard arguments softly put, are the really effective weapons, but it takes some of us a long time to learn this; and generally, in our younger days, we wear away our own strength by the violence with which we use it.

**10.** *But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.*

It is a horrible thing when a man's sin goes the full length of his knowledge, and he sins up to the degree of his possibilities.

**11, 12.** *Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots —*

“These are spoilers,” so it may be rendered.

**12.** *In your feasts of charity,*

They spoil your love feasts at the communion table, they mar your fellowship when you gather together for worship.

**12.** *When they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear.*

Some of the best Christians, who come to the Lord's table, come there in great fear and trembling; and I have known some, who have had an undoubted right to be there, half afraid to come. Yet those very persons who have a holy fear lest they should come amiss, are those who really ought to come. “Feeding themselves without fear” is the mark of those who are farther off from God.

**12.** *Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds.*

They believe according to what is said to them by the last man who speaks to them; they are easily persuaded to this doctrine, and to that, and the other.

**12.** *Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit,*

They seem to be bearing fruit, but it drops off before it ripens.

**12, 13.** *Twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, —*

They have nothing to say for Christ, yet they must say something, so they are “raging waves of the sea,” —

**13.** *Foaming out their own shame, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the thickness of darkness for ever.*

These are the false professors of religion, the members of the church for whom there are seats reserved in hell. This is a dreadful thought: “to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever;” — not for the heathen, not for the open refusers of the gospel, but for such as creep into the churches unawares, teach false doctrine, live unholy lives.

**14, 15.** *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*

How Jude knew that Enoch said that, I cannot tell; it is another instance of inspiration.

**16.** *These are murmurers, complainers,*

You know the sort of people alluded to here, nothing ever satisfies them. They are discontented even with the gospel. The bread of heaven must be cut into three pieces, and served on dainty napkins, or else they cannot eat it; and very soon their soul loatheth even this light bread. There is no way by which a Christian man can serve God so as to please them. They will pick holes in every preacher’s coat; and if the great High Priest himself were here, they would find fault with the color of the stones of his breastplate.

**16-19.** *Walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should talk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*

People who must, if they make a profession of religion at all, be continually breaking up churches, and holding themselves aloof from others, having no fellowship with anybody but those who can say “shibboleth” as plainly as they can, and sound they pretty loudly.

**20-22.** *But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference:*

Some of those professors, who are not living consistently with their profession, in whom you can see signs and tokens of sin, yet there may be some trace of repentance, some reason to hope that they will forsake the evil when they see it to be evil: “have compassion” upon them.

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

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

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



# REVELATION

## REVELATION 1

**1, 2.** *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.*

John was one who was of the same spirit as his Master. He lived in very intimate communion with his Lord, and, therefore, to him the choicest revelations were made. The Lord does not reveal his secret to uncongenial minds. He that will do his will shall know of the doctrine, and he shall know all secret things. Oh! if we lived nearer to God, if we walked more in the love of Christ, how much more we might know and see; or, if we saw not visions, yet there are inward perceptions to the heart which God would grant us if we lived more in the light of his countenance.

**3.** *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep these things which are written therein for the time is at hand.*

It is not a book to be put on the shelf. There is practical teaching in it, It is not intended to lead us into vagaries of speculation, but it is meant for practical purposes. We are to keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.

**4, 5.** *John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne: And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.*

Think, dear friends, how this benediction may be fulfilled. "Grace be to you," he says, "and peace." And what are to be the fountains and springs of this peace? It is to come from God first, from him which is. All that God is, is a fountain of peace and grace to us. And from him which was — all that he has ever been, the eternal past, the changeless purposes, the divine predestination of the Infinite. There are springs of peace and grace here. And from

him which is to come. All that God will ever be, all the manifestations of his power, his justice, his love, which the ages are yet to see all these are wells of grace and peace to God's own people. I want you to think of this. And when your minds are disturbed, and you have need of peace, and when your heart is sinking and you have need of grace, come to God for both of these things, regarding him as him which is, which was, and which is to come. And there are seven spirits which are before his throne. The Holy Ghost, in whatever way he operates in any of his divine works — in all these he is the Comforter, the source of grace and peace to us. You need not be afraid of the Holy Spirit, even though he be the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning, for he will burn up nothing in us but what ought to be consumed, and will judge nothing but what ought to be judged and to be condemned; so that peace may come to us from the seven spirits which are before the throne; but specially grace and peace from Jesus Christ as the Faithful Witness. Whatever he bears witness to, it is full of grace and peace to believers, and he himself is the first begotten from the dead. Oh! his resurrection! what a wondrous fountain of grace and peace that is to us! And then his divine sovereignty — his rule over all providence and nature, the Prince of the kings of the earth — what grace and peace may every one of you who love him find there! At the thought of this, the divine writer turns from his benediction to a doxology.

*5, 6. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

Brethren, the very best work which we ever do on earth is to adore. You are blessed in prayer, but you are seven times blessed in praise. When you get to the doxology, it is the benediction made more sublime. The benediction takes wings and mounts into a celestial atmosphere, when you begin to adore and magnify him that loved you, and washed you from your sins. There is one thing that adoration does: it helps us to see: and when you close your eyes in adoration, you see more than when you have them open in any other way. I am sure of this, for the next line is: —

*7. Behold he cometh with clouds;*

John sees him. He adored, him. Strong Son of God, Immortal love, Whom though we have not seen thy face, Unceasing we adore. In that adoration we behold thee. "Behold he cometh with clouds."

*7. And every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen.*

What is more, adoration helps us to hear as well as to see. It supplies us with new senses. John hears this voice.

*8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

Happy man that thus in reverent worship hears God speaking to him in answer to his voice to God.

*9. I John, who also am your brother,*

How sweetly this sounds. This is a man that has seen and heard God. This is a man who is full of visions, who has beheld the broken seals and the poured out vials; the man that is familiar with the infinite. "I, John, who also am your brother."

*9. And companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patches, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

That is a wondrous linking, is it not, in this verse? — "the kingdom and patience." You must have the cross and the crown together. We get the kingdom of Christ, but not without the passion of Christ. There is the cross marked on all the treasure trove that we find in Christ. It is not genuine if it is not marked with the cross. "The kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

**10, 11.** *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last:*

What evidence we have here of the divinity of Christ, for we shall see, as we read on, that it is Christ that is speaking here; and just now it was the Father which in much the same words said, "I am Alpha and Omega." We cannot always draw the line between the voice of God and the voice of the God-man, Christ Jesus, and we need not wish to do so, for Holy Scripture does not draw us up rigid, but it would have us believe it, all the same for that. Yet it is always accurate, always true, where it has shades of definition; for, after all,

Christ is so truly God that whether it speak of him absolutely as God, or of him as God and man, Mediator, it matters little to us.

**11-12.** *And, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.*

It is so natural in us to want to see the place from which the voice proceeds.

**12-16.** *And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace: and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*

I will not stop to explain those details. The picture is too sacred. Let it stand before you in its glory, and listen to these words.

**17.** *And when I saw him. I fell at his feet as dead.*

Oh! how the "I" dies when Christ is manifested! How we sink! And yet our joys shall rise unutterably, immeasurably high. I fell at his feet as dead.

**17.** *And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:*

There is where your comfort comes from — not from what you are, but from what he is. You are the last, but he — here is the point — he is the first and the last.

**18, 19.** *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, Come, lay aside thy fears. Thy fears disqualify thee from holding the pen.*

Thou hast scarcely dared to look. I am sure thou wilt not date to write until I strengthen thee.

**19, 20.** *And the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;*

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: The messengers, the ministers of the seven churches.

**20.** *And the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*

God bless our reading to our rich instruction.

## **REVELATION 1**

**1, 2.** *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.*

John was a most suitable person to see and to bear record of the Word of God, for in his gospel (John 19:35) he describes himself at the cross as both seeing and bearing record. So now that his once-crucified Lord is in his glory, it seemed meet that the same beloved disciple should both see him and bear record concerning him. No eyes were so fit to see the glory of Christ as those which had looked with so much love into the eyes of Jesus of Nazareth in the days of his humiliation. The head that had rested upon his Master's bosom at the supper table was prepared thereby for all the glory that should afterwards be revealed. The nearer your communion with Christ is, the more will you be permitted to know of him. Our perceptions of Christ, if they are true, will be spiritual; and in proportion as our spiritual life is in a right condition, shall we be able to know more and more of him.

**3.** *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

I do not perceive that John says, "Blessed are they that understand this Book," for, surely, they would be very few. I do not doubt that there are portions of Scripture which are not meant to be understood as yet, —things concerning the future which are wrapped up in a phraseology which will be plain enough when that future arrives, but which for the present are not intended so much to

gratify our curiosity as to stimulate our watchfulness. To keep us constantly on the look out, is the main object of every revelation concerning the future. So far, then, we have the proem or preface of this great Book of the Revelation.

**4, 5.** *John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.*

John's benediction to the seven churches of Asia is like that of Paul when he is writing to a Christian church, "Grace be unto you, and peace." You have probably noticed that, when Paul is writing to a minister individually, his greeting is, "Grace, mercy, and peace;" for they who have the solemn charge of souls need "mercy" above all other men. May they find mercy of God in that day! But to the churches themselves, it is simply this double benediction, "Grace be unto you, and peace." These blessings, coming in their proper order, grace first, and peace afterwards, are very precious. That peace which is not founded upon grace, and does not follow grace, is a false peace. "Grace be unto you, and peace." But if you have grace, peace ought to follow; you have a right to it, it is a logical sequence to the possession of the grace of God. Well does Dr. Watts sing, —

"If sin be pardon'd, I'm secure;  
Death hath no sting beside."

If grace be given, glory will follow. Wherefore, beloved, "Grace be unto you, and peace." And this grace and peace must come from the Lord Jesus: "from him which is, and which was, and which is to come." This grace and peace must come from the eternal Father, the self-existent Jehovah, and from the ever-blessed Spirit. God alone is the Lord and Giver of grace and peace. And this double blessing must come from a realization of the Lord Jesus Christ in his glorious character as "the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth." Never forget, dear friends, that even today Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth. The Queen reigns, and the Czar reigns; but it is still more true that "The Lord reigneth." There is One who is higher than the highest of all earthly kings, even "the Prince of the kings of the earth."

**5, 6.** *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

Do not all of us, who truly know our Lord, say that? Do we not wish for him glory and honour beyond anything that we can conceive? May all dominion be his for ever and ever, for it is his by right!

**7.** *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him. and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.*

They have crucified him; all kindreds of the earth have, alas! had a share in Christ's death, and dying unforgiven, or being found alive at his coming without repentance, they "shall wail because of him."

**7.** *Even so, Amen.*

Though the wicked shall wail at Christ's appearing, the saints must give consent to the judgments of God as well as to his mercies: "Even so, Amen."

**8-12.** *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.*

This was a very natural thing for John to do. We always feel a desire to see who it is that addresses us, and especially would this be the case if we heard such a sentence as this, spoken with a trumpet voice by One who could truly say it, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." Who would not have turned to see such a Speaker? I am sure that John would, for he must have recognized that voice, though it was pitched in a higher key than usual, and was full of more sonorous force than when he last heard it. He must have

known the voice of the **Start Here** Well-beloved as he spake again to his highly-favored servant.

**12, 13.** *And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, —*

It was the very same Son of man, but John could only say” like unto the Son of man,” — like unto the One whom he had known long before, and whom he had loved with undying affection, — like him, but, oh! how unlike him, notwithstanding. The Christ in every position is still discernible as “like unto the Son of man.” As John sees him, with his face shining like the sun in its strength, yet still he is “like unto the Son of man.” In the manger, he was like to what he was afterwards upon the cross; on the cross, he was like to what he is now upon his throne; and when he comes again in all his glory, he will still be like unto what he was and always is, — “ the Son of man.” “In the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man,” —

**13-18.** *Clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

That dear familiar touch of Christ’s right hand had quickened John into sensibility again, and brought him back from his swoon when he was lying at Christ’s feet as dead. O Master, if we are dead in a worse sense than John was, if we have fallen into a spiritual swoon, if we have come into a fainting fit, lay thy pierced hand upon us now, and we shall live! Come near us, O Lord, come nearer, nearer still, and touch thy servants with thy hand of love and power, and we shall be able to hear what thou hast to say, and our heart shall be strong to obey thy command!

**19, 20.** *Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the*

*seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.*

Then he proceeds to explain what he meant, just after the manner of the Son of man who, when he pronounced a parable in public, opened it up to his own disciples in secret, even as he does still. Oh, how blessedly is “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever”! His characteristics never change what he was, he is, and that he ever will be, blessed be his holy name.”

**20.** *The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*

The Lord bless to us all the reading of this precious passage from his Word! Amen.

### **REVELATION 1:15-20**

In the first fourteen verses we have given to us part of the glowing description of the glories of the ascended Christ, and here it is completed.

**15.** *And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.*

Seas lashed to tempests, cataracts leaping from their stupendous heights—such was the voice of Christ.

**16.** *And he had in his right hand seven stars: And out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword:*

For his word is a killing thing.

**16.** *And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*

What magnificent figures put together! We are well prepared to find that John could not long endure this majestic representation of the Lord.

**17.** *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.*

He was not only brought to the posture of reverence, but he was so overawed that he became unconscious. It is the same person upon whose breast John had leaned his head, yet now he is represented as John had never seen him before. He was not so at the last supper; he was not so upon the cross; he was not so on the Mount of Transfiguration; he was not so even when he had risen from the dead, and, perhaps, he will not be so when we see him in his glory.

This was a specially instructive representation of Christ, and it was too much even for the trained and educated spirit of John the Divine.

**17, 18.** *And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

This is the great consolation of the people of God when they are brought very low — that Jesus lives, that Jesus reigns, that Jesus still comforts us and draws near to us in all the majesty of his power.

**19, 20.** *Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.*

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

This exposition consisted of readings from PSALM 77; REVELATION 1:15-20.

### **REVELATION 6:12-17**

**12-16.** *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:*

Think of the contrast between this awful cry and the sentence we read just now: “Then did they spit in his face.” “Mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne.” Think, too, of the contrast of which we were reminded in our opening hymn, —

“While sinners in despair shall call,  
‘Rocks’ hide us; mountains, on us fall!’

The saints, ascending from the tomb,  
Shall joyful sing, 'The Lord is come!'"

**17.** *For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

Let us read further on in the same Book. (See Revelation 19:11-16)

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 26:57-68. REVELATION 6:12-17, 19:11-6, 20:11-15, 21:1.

## **REVELATION 7**

**1.** *And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.*

A perfect calm there must be till God's people are saved. Not a leaf shall stir to do them damage. Not a dash of foam upon the waters — no movement of wind, or sea, or tree.

**2, 3.** *And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with aloud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*

Everything exists for the servant of God. Creation is but a scaffold for the Church; and when God's Church is finished, then all may be taken down, but not till then.

**4, 5.** *And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand.*

The order is not that of nature, but of grace, else Reuben would have come first. And the election of God is not according to birth or blood, but according to his sovereign will. Judah: then Reuben.

**5-8.** *Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were*

*sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand.*

And of the last and least tribe still the same.

**8.** *Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.*

Methinks many believers belong to the tribe of Benjamin — doubting, fearing, little in faith, and confidence, but Benjamin still has his men.

**9.** *After this I beheld,*

The Gentile Church.

**9.** *And, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,*

It will do some people good to see that sight, for they fancy that all the saints go to their place of worship. There are no good people anywhere except those that think exactly as they do. So they seem to fancy. Oh! that their eyes were opened a little, for I am afraid that some Christians are very like the mouse that had always lived in a box, and on some grand occasion climbed up to the edge of the box. He looked over and saw the vast area of the cupboard, and said, “I had no idea the world was so big as that”, and yet it had never seen outside the cupboard even then. Oh! for eyes that could see a sight like this. “After this, I behold, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number” (we can count pretty high too) “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.”

**9.** *Stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes.*

Perfectly pure — perfectly happy — arrayed like priests and conquerors, for they had “palms in their hands.”

**9-11.** *And palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne.*

In the outer ring and about the elders that represent the church, who stand in the inner ring, nearest to Christ, and nearest akin to the Son of Man.

**11, 12.** *And about the elders and four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God. Saying, Amen: Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.*

Grand ascriptions of praise to make the worship perfect, as all worship should be which is presented to God — as all worship will be when we shall once get to heaven.

**13.** *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these This vast crowd — what are these?*

**13-17.** Which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

## **REVELATION 7**

**1.** *And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.*

Observe that God has servants ever ready for his work. There were winds to be restrained. “And I saw four angels,” — mighty spiritual beings — who had power over the air. These winds were to be restrained until all God’s people were safely sealed and you may depend upon it that no calamity shall happen to destroy the people of God, they must first be saved. There shall be no deluge till there is the ark; there shall be no Romans to destroy Jerusalem till there is a little city in the mountains to which the disciples may flee. God will protect his own. The dead calm, the perfect quietude which prevailed while the angels restrained the winds is set forth in these words. The wind did not appear to blow on land, or sea, or tree, not a ripple broke the surface of the waters, not a leaf stirred on the bough, everything is quiet until God’s people are secured.

**2, 3.** *And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying,*

*Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their forehead.*

See how other things are protected for the sake of God's people. The earth and the sea and even the trees, have a cordon of safety round about them while God's people are being secured. When the Lord Jesus put to sea on the Galilean lake, we read that there were with him many other little ships, and when the calm came for his ship they were in the calm, too. And so it is a good thing if you are not in the Church, yet to have some sort of connection with it; a great thing for the age to have the Church of God in it, for God will take care of a nation often for the sake of his people. As he would have spared Sodom had there been righteous men found in it, so doth he spare nations for the sake of his saints.

*4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*

Now we are going to read their names. I hope you won't say it is tiresome to read them. Remember he that wrote this Book in the Father of them, and children's names are not wearisome to their own father. Remember, he that fills this Book bought them with his blood, and wore them upon his breastplate as the great High Priest of Israel; bearing all these names upon his heart, graven upon the palms of his hands. We need not be weary of hearing names which Christ has worn on his breast.

*5-8. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.*

Juda stands first and Benjamin stands last: they were joined together, but here they are as widely divided as they can be, yet they stand in an equal position; and the day shall come when first and last

shall rejoin together in the equal blessing of the Most High. Where is Dan? Not mentioned here.

See, there is nothing without mystery. We shall never understand all the things of God. It seemed simple enough to bless the twelve tribes, and yet there is one wanting.

**9.** *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;*

This is the great gathering of the Gentile multitude redeemed by blood, numbered by God, never to be numbered by men, being like the sand on the seashore, innumerable. Of all colors they shall be, and they will look to us on earth if we could see them, to be a motley group, and if we heard them speak it would seem a strange jargon. Many are the languages of earth, but one is the speech of heaven. All hearts are alike in the kingdom of the Most High, whatever the color of the flesh. Do you know, that entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem seems to me to be the pattern we have here before us, only this is the fulfillment of it. Here are the crowds that gathered about him, the twelve disciples lead the way, and here are the multitudes with the palms in their hands scattering them in the pathway of their king.

**10.** *And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*

In Jerusalem they cried Hosanna, which was “Save, Lord,” but now they have risen a little higher, and they sing, “Salvation to our God.” It is the same melody but it is pitched to a loftier key, and there are more to sing it; and they are not now conducting a prince to his throne but they are looking up to the king upon his throne, reigning there.

**11.** *And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,*

Not some of the angels, nor many angels, nor even an innumerable company of angels, but all the angels; they shall all gather on that august occasion around the throne of God and the Lamb.

**12.** *Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*

What a deep, sonorous Amen that will be! What a mighty volume of sound! How full and rich, how hearty! Oh, that our ears may be there to hear it, and our tongues to swell it.

**13.** *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?*

“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest.” You see the question was put by an angel, as an answer one of the elders answered. Whom did he answer? Why, John; and what John’s heart was inquiring. He was saying to himself, “Who are these?” And one of the elders was responsive to his heart’s inquiry, and put the same inquiry into words on his behalf.

**14-15.** *And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*

Shall “tabernacle over them,” that is the exact word, as though he were a pavilion, a canopy over them.

**16-17.** *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

It looks almost as if they might have a tear in their eye when they first come there; certainly they shall never be sure of being without a tear till they have crossed the pearly threshold, but then he shall wipe away the very tear, there shall be no possibility of weeping there. May our eyes behold that sinless and sorrowless land, and its Eternal Lord!

## **REVELATION 7:9-17**

**9.** *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, —*

Our numbering can go a very long way, what, therefore, must be the countless hosts of the redeemed who are to be “a great multitude, which no man could number?” And what an infinite variety there will be among them, seeing that they shall not only be “of all nations,” but out of those nations they shall be of all kindreds, and people, and tongues,” — that is, all sorts and conditions of men, of every race, and of every age from the first century down to the last. Christ’s immeasurable redemption price must bring, to him a great reward. Isaiah long ago foretold that “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied;” and it is no little result that will satisfy him for such travail of soul as he endured. This great multitude “stood before the throne, and before the Lamb,” —

**9.** *Clothed with white robes, —*

To set forth their purity, their victory, and their entrance into the marriage state, for such was the color usually worn on such occasions. “Clothed with white robes,” to show that they had entered into their rest, so that their garments were no longer soiled through their toil. They have reached their everlasting Sabbath, their week-day service is over for ever.

**9-11.** *And palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon, the throne, and unto the Lamb.*

And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, The angels form the outer ring. The elders, who represent the Church of the redeemed, are nearer to the throne of God than even the holy angels are. Nearest to God in heaven are those who have been redeemed from among men. How high a dignity — how noble an estate — awaits us by-and-by! But, all alike, both saved men and unfallen angels, “fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,” —

**12-17.** *Saying Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of his Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst, any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 3, AND 11:20-30; AND REVELATION 7:9-17.

## **REVELATION 7:9-17**

### **9. After this.-**

I thought I would read this familiar and very precious passage once more as so many of our number have gone home to heaven during the past few weeks. There has been a great flight of the Lord's doves upward to the heavenly dovecotes lately. We will think of them as we read these well-known words:-“After this”-

**9.** *I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;*

Their purity is indicated by the white robes in which they were clothed, and possibly also their royal priesthood, while their victory over all their foes is typified by the palms which they held in their hands. Montgomery was right when he wrote,-

“Palms of glory, raiment bright,  
Crowns that never fade away,  
Gird and deck the saints in light,  
Priests, and kings, and conquerors they.”

**10.** *And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.*

They all sing one song, and it is the same song that we sing on earth, "Salvation to our God." They know nothing up in heaven of any salvation by the works of the law or by human merits. Oh, no! they sing, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

**11, 12.** *And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*

You see that all the glory is given to God; man is lost sight of, humanitarianism has no place of honour in heaven, though many, nowadays, make so much of it here on earth. It is unto Father, Son, and Spirit, unto the one only Creator, Saviour, Inspirer that the angels ascribe "blessing, end glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, .... for ever and ever."

**13-17.** *And one of the elders answered saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountain of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

This is a vision of the heavenly life above. I want you to keep the last two verses in your minds, for we shall presently meet with very similar expressions in a place where, perhaps, you would scarcely have expected to find them, and there you will see that those expressions are used concerning the heavenly life below as here they are used concerning the heavenly life above. Turn to the Book of the prophet Isaiah, the 49<sup>th</sup> chapter, and there you will read a passage which brings us back to earth, it takes us from the Lamb in the midst of the throne in heaven to the Lamb amidst the

despising and rejecting sons of men, It is our Lord Jesus Christ who is here speaking:-Isaiah

This exposition consisted of readings from REVELATION 7:9-17; AND ISAIAH 49.

### **REVELATION 7:9-17**

We will read two passages from the New Testament tonight. The first will show us where the glorified saints are, and the second will tell us what is to become of their bodies.

**9-13.** *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, the wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me,—*

In reply, as it were, to John's question put by the very look of his countenance. Sometimes, the Lord Jesus Christ gave an answer to men who had never spoken to him; and the angelic elder here followed his example, and also in another respect imitated his Lord, by replying to the inquisitive glance of John by asking him a question.

**13-17.** *What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out, of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, the made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day the night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

This is to be the future state of all those who are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, and to whom the saving grace of God

has come: so that, concerning all who have thus fallen asleep, we sorrow not as those without hope, for we know that all is well with them for ever. Now let us read a little of what the apostle Paul was inspired to write with regard to the resurrection of the body. (See 1 Corinthians 15:1-28, 50-58)

This exposition consisted of readings from REVELATION 7. 9-17; 1 CORINTHIANS 15. 1-28, 50-58.

## REVELATION 12

*1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:*

This is that woman of whom the promise runs, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” John saw this in a vision in the heavenly places; he saw the Church of God, enthroned, made glorious, clothed with the sun, having the brightness of divine light about her, with all that is variable, changeable as “the moon under her feet, and upon her head the crown “that her Lord had given, her “ — twelve patriarchs, twelve prophets, twelve apostles, a complete number of glorious lights kindled from heaven.

*2. And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*

That child that is born of her, that seed of the woman, that shall bruise the serpent’s head is: first, Christ, and then all the first-born, of whom he is the great representative.

*3, 4. And there appeared another wonder’ in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*

The spirit of evil in the heavenlies fighting with the power of light and goodness and grace, a mysterious being with great power, high intelligence, seven heads, ten horns, and having mighty influence over multitudes of men, so that there were seven crowns upon his seven heads. “And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.” The crocodile, which, I suppose, was the earthly figure from which John’s dream sprang,

has great force in its tail; and Satan doubtless of old drew from heaven a number of its stars — other angels fell with him. And there are times in the heavens of the church when the ministers fall; they seem to go in companies. Those who should be lights for God, are into darkness, and become teachers of heresy “He did cast them down to the earth.” They lost their brightness, they betrayed their earthly origin. “And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.” Remember how he sought to slay Jesus; and the like is the case of all the man-children born unto God, who will be of service in the kingdom of God. The main attack of the dragon was against the child: the main attack of the power of evil is against Christ and everything Christly. If he could destroy the gospel, he would not care about the church one whit: the woman might go if the man-child could be destroyed.

*5. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up ,unto God, and to his throne.*

That is the brief history of the birth of Christ, and of his going from us. He “was caught up unto GOD, and to his throne.” God will take care of the great principle of truth. If it cannot have a refuge on earth, he will find it a refuge in heaven.

*6. And the woman fled into the wilderness where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.*

The church of GOD was long in obscurity. You can hardly find it among the Albigenses and Waldenses. It was hidden away among the mounts. The Wycliffites, and the Lollards, and others, held fast the truth; but history scarcely records their names. The woman was in the wilderness, hidden away for many a day. “And there was war in heaven.” You are not to think of heaven as a place, but among the heavenlies. John, in a vision, saw the great contending powers of evil. He was like the prophet when he saw a mountain full of horses of fire and chariots of fire.

*7, 8. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels. And prevailed not: neither was their place found any more in heaven.*

You remember how our Lord, who is the true Michael, the only great archangel, said at the beginning of the preaching of the gospel, "I beheld Satan as lightning falling from heaven." His power among the heavenlies is gone; he was cast out of the place called heaven; so is he now, by the preaching of the gospel, and by the death of Christ, cast down from among the heavenly influences.

**9.** *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

This was done in the olden time as a matter of fact. It is done continually, spiritually, as Christ is lifted up, and his gospel gets the victory.

**10.** *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren its cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*

Always at it! this prince of evil pretending to goodness, and daring to bring accusations against the Holy One of God. But he is not permitted now to stand in the court; he is hurled from his high place. He used his place with a desperate pertinacity of malice, accusing the brethren day and night.

**11, 12.** *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*

"Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them." Let great joy be in the hearts of all spiritual beings, whether angels or men, for Satan is cast down from among them. But the battle is not over; the scene of it is only transferred from the heavenlies to the earthly. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." We may expect him to rage more and more as the time of his destruction comes nearer and nearer. He is like a bad tenant; he will damage the house out of which he is to be ejected. But he is to be ejected, and let God be glorified for it.

**13.** *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.*

He had changed his place, but he did not change his nature; and so he still perseveres in his attack upon God.

**14, 15.** *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and halt a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.*

Read history and see what fierce and brutal persecutions were used like floods against the gospel of Christ.

**16.** *And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and wallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.*

It is poor help that the earth can give, and yet God has over-ruled to make it useful. The kings and the powers of this world have for their own reasons sometimes protected the church. It was so in Luther's day. The jealousy that was felt of the influence of the Court of Rome politically tended to the preservation of Luther and those round about him, so that the gospel was not destroyed. "The earth helped the woman," and we may expect that even those political disasters, which we often dread, will all end that way. How often has priestly arrogance been put to the blush even for political reasons! We have nothing to do with that, but still we can see how God can over-rule. It is always amiss when a woman begins to help the earth: she has nothing to do with that: let the Church leave the State alone. But sometimes it happens that in the political providence of God the earth helps the woman.

**17.** *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have testimony of Jesus Christ.*

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman." If ever you meet with a church of God which the devil likes, it is good for nothing; but if it is a true church of God, if it holds the truth, and if it walks in holiness, it will always be true. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed." He had destroyed many already with that flood of persecution, and he kept on a battle with the remnant of her seed, "which keep the

commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Into the deep mysteries of this passage I have not attempted to go, but have simply skimmed the surface God bless the reading to us.

## REVELATION 14

1. *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb —*

John always writes of Jesus as the “Lamb.” His Lord is to him in his sacrificial character always “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” by the shedding of his blood. “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb” —

1. *Stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. The Revised Version has it, “having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads.” Now they are known to be the Lord’s; on earth that fact was questioned, but his name is written on their foreheads now. Sometimes they themselves had to question it, but now it is apparent to all, the distinguishing mark is stamped upon their brow:*

“having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.”

2. *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*

It was very loud, but very sweet. It is not easy in earthly music to blend the two: but in heaven, all the energies of living men shall be thrown into the song; and yet it shall be sweet as the touch of a minstrel when he lays his fingers gently among the strings of the harp.

3. *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne,*

They could not sing any old song there. The songs of earth, sweet as some of them are, are not good enough to be sung in heaven. With a new experience, new delights, and a clearer vision of their Lord, they must have a new song.

3. *And before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*

Heaven is not the place to learn that song; it must be learned on the earth You must learn here the notes of free grace and dying love;

and when you have mastered their melody, you will be able to offer to the Lord the tribute of a grateful heart, even in heaven, and blend it with the harmonies eternal. Suppose, for a moment, that you could go there, and that you were unprepared to sing the new song, you would have to say, "I cannot join in the chorus, for I do not know the tune." You must learn the song now, the new song of praise unto our God, or you cannot be admitted there. I should not expect, if I went down to the Handel Festival, for the conductor to permit me to take a place in the choir. He would ask me "Can you sing? Have you ever rehearsed the matchless music of Handel?" and when I answered "No," he would tell me to stand aside; so you must learn the music of Calvary, you must learn the music of the name of Jesus, or you cannot sing in heaven. No man could learn the song but the redeemed from the earth; not redeemed, you see, by a general redemption, of which some so loudly talk; but redeemed from among men by a special redemption, which took them out from the rest of mankind, by a price paid for them, so that they were bought as others were not bought, by the precious blood of Jesus, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.

*4. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.*

They were pure and chaste in the sight of God.

*4. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.*

His choice attendants, his body-guard.

*4, 5. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile:*

"No lie." They were truthful, they were truth-speakers.

*5. For they are without fault —*

Or, blemish.

*5. Before the throne of God.*

Like him with whom they associated, the Lamb of God, they were without blemish and without spot.

*6. And I saw —*

What wonderful sights John saw! I do not wonder that, he saw them; he had leaned his head on Christ's bosom, and that qualified him to see what you and I cannot see. Near communion to Christ is

the best qualification for a vision of mystery. Get thee into the very heart of Christ, and thou shalt see wonderful things: "I saw" —

**6, 7.** *Another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach, unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him;*

Is this the gospel? It is one version, evidently, of the everlasting gospel. "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." Truly, to worship him as he reveals himself, is true godliness; and in it lies all the gospel: "Having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him."

**7, 8.** *For the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen,*

This will not happen till the gospel is fully preached. Superstition does not come down unless true religion is set up. One angel proclaims the everlasting gospel; the next declares that the great system of error is fallen: "Babylon is fallen."

**8.** *That great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

You know that gigantic system of error which professes to come from God, and to be the only true church; but it must fall.

**9, 10.** *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:*

They sometimes say that we talk very terribly about the world to come. Do we say more than the Scripture says? Do we use more terrific emblems than the Holy Ghost uses when he speaks after this fashion? This is a generation that is not to be pleased, neither do we seek to please it. God's wrath is terrible, and our language cannot be too strong to express the overwhelming power of it.

**11.** *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

Keep you true to Christ; wear his name in your forehead. Follow no system of error; do not be deluded either by Ritualism or Rationalism, by superstition or by unbelief. Keep close to the Word of God, and ask to be taught of the Spirit of God.

**12, 13.** *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

Accursed were they who carried the mark of the beast, and went after falsehood; but blessed are they who follow Christ, even though they die. Dying in the Lord, their works survive them, and they themselves live for ever with him.

**14.** *And I looked, and behold a white cloud,*

One of these days, every eye will look and see what is here described. A little time may elapse, but it will soon be past. How quickly years fly away! Think where you will be in the day when you, too, will say, "I looked, and behold a white cloud."

**14-16.** *And upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.*

This is the gathering in of the godly, who are Christ's wheat. He himself reaps them; no angel, mark you, but himself, with his own sharp sickle and with his own dear hand. These are his sheaves, he sowed for wheat; he himself was that wheat which fell into the ground and died, and brought forth much fruit. So he, into his own bosom, gathers his own sheaves with his own hand. "May I be among them!" Make that your prayer tonight. May I be one golden ear in Christ's great harvest!"

**17.** *And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*

Not this time the King, but an angel; not the Son of man that sat on the cloud, but an angel, the servant of God, deputed to execute vengeance.

**18, 19.** *And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in, his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth,*

This is the gathering together of the ungodly, those wicked clusters that ripen in sin, and that become red with iniquity. Christ does not gather them, you see. That is left to an angel to do; he thrust in his Sickle, and gathered the grapes of the earth.

**19.** *And cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.*

Can you see the clusters flung into the winepress? Will you be there? God grant that neither you nor I may, in that terrible day, be among the clusters of the wicked!

**20.** *And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*

So terrible will be even the preliminary destruction of the ungodly. Though they grow in clusters, yet shall they perish. “Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished.” “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith” unto each one of us. Amen.

## **REVELATION 14**

The Church of God had undergone a very great trial; there had arisen a cruel and wicked persecuting system, described by John in his vision as a beast, — a terrible dragon, of which we read that “it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” This was bad enough; but afterwards there arose another system of evil, which was even more dangerous, because it was an imitation of the truth. Another beast came up out of the earth,

having two horns like a lamb, yet he spake as a dragon; and of him John writes, "he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads." I will not go into the symbolic meaning of these two beasts; it is sufficient to observe that they had very terrible power, and one might have thought that under their successive attacks the Church of God would have been destroyed. Yet note how this chapter begins.

*1. And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, Jesus is not dead, he still lives. He is not defeated: "a Lamb stood on the mount Sion." He is not disturbed or troubled, but he stands in the posture of quiet confidence. "A Lamb stood on the mount Sion;" Jesus is not driven out of his Church, but he is still dwelling in the midst of his people.*

That is something, yet unbelief says, "Well, I can understand that John saw the Lord there, but had he any people with him? Had he any Church? Listen: "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion," —

*1. And with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*

They are all there, a vast number, a complete number, the exact number which in the seventh chapter of this Book had been described as sealed. They are all there without exception; not one of them is lost, but they all stand fast as a great army surrounding their glorious Leader. Yes, my brethren, in the darkest times, Christ has his Church still around him; it is with him as it was when the Lord said to Elijah, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." Be of good courage; if your eyes are but anointed with the heavenly eye-salve, you may see, as John saw, the Lamb on mount Sion, surrounded by multitudes of faithful followers.

*2. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and so the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*

As loud as thunder, and yet as musical as the choicest notes from a band of harps, — such is the testimony of the saints, such is the expression of their exultant joy in their Lord.

*3. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders:*

See brethren, how little the powers of darkness can do; not only are the saints all there, but they are singing. The devil cannot rob Christ of a single sonnet; the stanzas of our grateful praise shall continue to be poured forth though all the dragons howl as they may: “They sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders.”

*3. And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*

There is a special redemption, a “redemption from the earth.” For such redeemed men there is a special song, which no others can learn; and that song will be sung by them in the darkest of all days, in the roughest of all weathers. When the dragons seem to triumph, Christ shall still have his praise, blessed be his holy name.

*4. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.*

This is the Scriptural metaphor for those who have not turned aside to idol gods, or to false opinions, or to unholy practices. You remember how Paul longed to present the Corinthian Christians “as a chaste virgin” to Christ; he desired that Christ might have all their love. These servants of God are of this sort, wholly the Lord’s.

*4. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

Let no man deny, then, that there is a special and particular redemption of God’s people. All men are not redeemed as these were redeemed, else the expression would be untruthful, or without meaning: “These were redeemed from among men.” There is an elect company for whom Christ especially laid down his life; they are his, and they are made to know that they are his, and to take the position of a blood-bought people who belong not to themselves, but to him who has bought them with his blood. These are the hundred and forty and four thousand who stand on the mount Sion with the Lamb in the midst of them.

*5. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

Kept, by divine grace, pure in doctrine, holy in life, devout in heart; these are the body-guard of the Lamb, the chosen companions of the King of kings, whose reward shall be unspeakably great for ever and ever.

**6, 7.** *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

The old interpreters used to understand these two verses as referring to the great Protestant Reformation. When the old dragon had done his utmost against the Church of God, and the thick darkness of the middle ages rested alike on the Church and the world, then God sent the Reformers, like flying angels, to preach the everlasting gospel, and their special message was, "Worship not saints, and angels, and relics, and crucifixes, but 'worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.'"

**8.** *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, se fallen, that great city, because she made as nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

Babylon always goes down when the gospel is preached; the very flight of the angelic preachers is sufficient to make old Rome totter to her fall. So our fathers used to explain this chapter, for so they understood it. I am not sure whether it refers to that or to any other particular form of anti-Christ; but whatever it may be, whenever the gospel is exalted, down goes the devil, and down goes the whole Babylonian system.

**9, 10.** *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence the Lamb:*

How we ought to dread any collusion with deadly error, any fellowship with the hypocrisies and falsehoods of those who would deceive, for if we receive the mark of the beast either in our forehead, so as to have unbelieving thoughts, or in our hand, so as to

do evil deeds, we shall have to suffer in company with Babylon, that great system of error which is only an imitation and a counterfeit of Christianity! What tremendously terrible words these are: "He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb"!

**11-15.** *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*

This is the ingathering of the people of God; you notice that this harvest of God is reaped by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, that Son of man, who sat upon the cloud, "having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle."

**16.** *And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.*

May you and I form a part of the great harvest! May we be found amongst those golden sheaves which are to be the reaping from Christ's great sowing when he gave himself for his people, and was cast into the earth as a grain of wheat to die, that he might not abide alone!

**17.** *And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*

The reaper this time is an angel.

**18.** *And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; And cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.*

This is the ingathering of the ungodly, they are not the Lord's harvest, they are the vintage of his wrath. This vintage is not reaped by him who wears the golden crown, the Lord Jesus Christ himself; but by one of his angels, who is bidden to thrust in his sharp sickle, and reap, for the hour of divine judgment has at last come.

**19.** *And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. Shall any of us ever be cast into the great winepress of the wrath of god?*

We shall, if we continue growing upon the evil vine, and are not grafted into Christ, the true and living Vine.

**20.** *And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*

By which striking symbol the apostle describes the greatness and the terror of the overthrow which must happen to the ungodly when once God begins to deal with them in judgment. Oh, that the abounding mercy of God would give us a place in his great harvest, and not leave us to be gathered in the vintage of his wrath, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

## **REVELATION 14**

**1.** *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written on their foreheads.*

The great question for us is, — shall we be among the number? If we have the Father's name engraved upon our hearts, we may conclude that we shall, one day, have it written in our foreheads, and that we shall be amongst that chosen company.

**2, 3.** *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*

Notice how loud their singing was, — it was like many waters and great thunder. But notice, also, the sweetness of it, for it was

melodious as the music of well-skilled harpers harping with their harps. Note, too, the freshness, the vivacity of it: “they sang as it were a new song.” Shall we be there to sing that new song? If so, we must be “redeemed from the earth,” not with a general, but with a particular redemption, which lifts us up from the rest of our fellow-creatures; and we must also have attended the saved rehearsals, for none can sing in heaven but those who have learnt the song; and none can learn it but those who are “redeemed from the earth.”

**4, 5.** *These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgin. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, these were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

Now we have another vision.

**6, 7.** *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea and the fountains of waters.*

This vision represents the spread of the gospel. It is generally referred to the Reformation period, when, on a sudden, the truth, which had so long lain hidden in old musty tomes, was proclaimed in every market-place. Beneath many a “gospel oak” the good news was told out, — the good news concerning Christ, — as if an angel were flying through the midst of heaven. This preaching of the truth led to the commencement of the downfall of Rome, which is here called Babylon, and which is ultimately to fall to utter and everlasting ruin.

**8.** *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

That is spiritual fornication, as we understand it in the Old Testament, — man’s idolatry, — the setting up of visible objects of worship, instead of the invisible God. And what is there, in all the world, that is so idolatrous as the so-called “religion” of Rome? She multiplieth her idol gods to great excess, — her crosses and her crucifixes, her saints and her saintesses, her “sacraments” and her

relics, her “old cast clouts” and her “old rotten rags.” The Papacy is the most paganish of all the paganisms that have ever existed on the face of the earth; but it is to come to an end, for the mouth of the Lord hath said so.

**9, 10.** *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:*

How clear, therefore, we ought to keep of this idolatrous system! For even if we have not the mark of the beast in our foreheads by an open profession of loyalty to it, yet if we have the mark in our hands by being the partakers of Rome’s sins, we shall also be partakers of her plagues concerning Romanism in all its forms. The great message to be proclaimed today is, “Come out of her, my people; — come away from her, as far as the poles are asunder; — that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

**11, 12.** *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

Truly, Rome has tried “the patience of the saints.” What country is there in Europe which has not been dyed crimson with the blood of the martyrs? The rack, the stake, the brook, the dungeon, the fires, all sorts of cruelties have been practiced upon those who “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Let the valleys of Piedmont speak; do they not cry aloud to our God for vengeance? Let the St. Bartholomew massacre bear witness before the living God. Let the stakes of Smithfield say, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

**13.** *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

It matters not where they die, or under what ignominy they die, —whether branded with the name of heretic, or cast out as the offscouring of all things, yet blessed are they, and their works follow them to heaven to bear witness to their faith, and they spiritually, continue to live on earth to propagate the gracious seed for which they laid down their lives.

**14-18.** *And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.*

After the glad harvest comes the sad vintage. After the ingathering of the righteous, there will be the ingathering of the wicked.

**19, 20.** *And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.*

And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

#### **REVELATION 18:20-24**

May the Spirit of God take away the veil from our eyes while we read what was revealed to the beloved apostle John! Here we have the prophecy of the destruction of the great anti-Christian system of Babylon, which, being interpreted, is and can be none other than the apostate church of Rome.

**18:20-24.** *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea,*

*saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall he found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. Now, after the false church is put away, the true Church of Christ shines out in all her glory and purity.*

This exposition consisted of readings from REVELATION 18:20-24; AND 19:1-18.

#### **REVELATION 18:21-24**

We have no difficulty in knowing to what city this great Babylon refers, for the Church of Rome, in the plenitude of its wisdom, has taken the title to itself in attempting to claim that Peter was the first bishop of Rome. They quote the text, "The church that is in Babylon saluteth thee" that church, they say, being the church in Rome. Therefore, Rome is Babylon. Beside, the whole of the eighteenth chapter gives such a description as can only apply to her, and she must, and shall, come to her end.

**21-24.** *And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsmen of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee, And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*

## REVELATION 19:1-10

**1-4.** *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, praying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen: Alleluia.*

For the overthrow of a monstrous system of error gives delight to all holy spirits, and chiefly to those who stand nearest the eternal throne.

**5-6.** *And a voice came out of the throne saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

The harlot church is put away: the true church is introduced. fully arrayed in perfect holiness, ready for the consummation of her own joy, and her master's — her last delight.

**7-10.** *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him, And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

If John made a mistake, because the saints in heaven are all so like their Master, it is well that the mistake was at once corrected, for angel-worship, or the worship of saints, is to be avoided by all saints. And God's word about it is, "See thou do it not." It is said that we should certainly pay reverence to holy men that are now with God, but see thou do it not.

Indeed, here, among men, the same kind of idolatry is sought to be kept up, and the preacher is arrayed in garments to make him distinct from the people, as though he were something better or different from them, and not their fellow-servant. But, for all this, let us hear the voice which says, "See thou do it not. I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

## **REVELATION 19:1-18**

**1-4.** *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt thee earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.*

Heaven and earth are equally glad, and they unite to adore the living God when the great apostasy, that has so long cursed the nations, is hurled into the sea.

**5, 6.** *And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

And his great power is never better seen than in crushing the powers of darkness, and putting the hosts of evil to the rout.

**7-10.** *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they, which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow*

*servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

All worship, therefore, of saints and angels is a gross error, not to be tolerated for a moment. John was mistaken in falling down to worship the angel; but he was speedily rebuked, and his mistake was quickly corrected. There is no doctrine that needs more to be preached just now than this message of the angel, "Worship God." Neither crosses, nor crucifixes, nor holy wafers, nor anything that can be seen or handled, must be worshipped: "Worship God." We need still to hear God's mighty voice proclaiming from mount Sinai the great law. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy 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 shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

**11.** *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make scar.*

Behold your Saviour, the Champion of the cause of truth! His war is not that of the carnal weapon and of garments rolled in blood. It is a spiritual warfare; but he wins a more glorious victory than ever sword or gun could gain.

**12-14.** *His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*

All his true ones, all his faithful ones, all his saints, whether ministers or not, the heavenly armies, "followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." Holiness is their armor, light is the panoply that they wear as they go forward to this holy war.

**15.** *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword,*

He puts down vice, and evil of every kind, not with the sword of steel, but with his word: "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword,"-

*15, 16. That with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

For this Son of God whom we worship, this Jesus of Nazareth, is Master of all. All power is in his hand, he is, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

*17, 18. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.*

By this highly figurative language, we are to understand that, when Christ goes forth to war in battling for the truth, and his true followers come after him, their victory will be certain, and the slain of the Lord will be many. We look not for carnage and bloodshed to establish the kingdom of Christ in the earth; but this revelation gives us a picture of the utter overthrow and destruction of all forms of error through the power of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen, so let it be! Would God that the King of kings would mount his white horse at once, and that all his people would follow him! He will do so at the right time, and then the victory shall be unto God, and to the truth, and to love, and to peace and holiness, for evermore.

This exposition consisted of readings from REVELATION 18:20-24; AND 19:1-18.

### **REVELATION 19:11-16**

*11, 12. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns;*

*"Bright with all his crowns of glory,*

See the royal Victor's brow."

Again note the contrast: "Then did they spit in his face." "And on his head were many crowns;" —

**12-16.** *And he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

And this is he in whose face his enemies did spit. Now turn to the next chapter. (See Revelation 20:11-15; 21:1)

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 26:57-68. REVELATION 6:12-17, 19:11-6, 20:11-15, 21:1.

## **REVELATION 19:11-16**

**11-13.** *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.*

That same Logos of whom John wrote in the gospel now stands before him, and he beholds him in his glory. That a delight it must have been to the seer of Patmos to see his Lord and Master once again in different array from that in which he had beheld him when, in humiliation he tabernacled here among the sons of men! His name is still the same — the Logos —the Word of God.

**14-16.** *And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

And this is the man of Nazareth. This is the crucified, despised, and rejected once. Servus servorum once. — Servant of servants but now King of kings and Lord of lords. And what will the end be of the battle that he wagers? Will any of his adversaries escape? Will they hold their own? No, they shall utterly be destroyed before him. All the powers of evil of false doctrine everything contrary to his mind — shall be destroyed. And this is set forth in symbolic imagery by the dreadful battle feast which usually succeeds a battle, when the vultures smell the carrion from afar and come to rend the spoil. It shall not be thus with the bodies of men, but thus with evil — thus with the powers of darkness.

### **REVELATION 20:11-15, 21:1**

*11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

Driven, like chaff before the wind, from the face of him who sat upon the throne.

*12-15. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

***Revelation 21:1.** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

This exposition consisted of readings from MATTHEW 26:57-68. REVELATION 6:12-17, 19:11-6, 20:11-15, 21:1.

### **REVELATION 21**

*1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

Astronomers tell us that, within living memory, several starry worlds have burnt out, and vanished out of sight. The apostle Peter has told us that this world also will be destroyed by fire, but it will afterwards be renewed, and a new sky and a new earth will appear after the first firmament and the first earth shall have become extinct. God means that this planet should continue to exist after it has had a new creation, and renewed its youth. The regeneration of his people, their new birth, is a foretaste of what is yet to happen to this whole world of ours. We have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and we groan within ourselves while we wait for the fullness of that new creation. "The first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea," because the sea is the emblem of separation, and destruction, and unrest. The sea hath her dead which shall be given up. The sea now cannot rest nor be quiet, but all shall be calm and tranquil in the new heaven and the new earth.

*2. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

John saw, in vision, the glorified Church of God coming to dwell on the new earth, descending for a while from heaven to be the very glory of the newly-created world.

*3, 4. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

When there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, and the Church shall be in her new and glorified condition, then there will be no need for all those purifying forces which have been so active here below. There shall be no death, nor sorrow nor crying, nor pain, nor trial of any kind; all shall be happiness for all shall be holiness. And then, as God dwelt of old among his people in the wilderness, and as Jesus Christ, the Word, was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld his glory, so in that new world shall God reveal himself to his people by a special indwelling and a peculiar nearness.

*5. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.*

Once, the Lord might have said, “Behold, I make all things;” but now he says, “Behold, I make all things new.” Glory be unto the great Creator! Did not the morning stars sing together for joy when he made the world? But equal if not greater glory must be ascribed to the great Regenerator, the New Creator, shall we not all sing together to his praise? Yes, that we shall if we are numbered among the “all things” that he makes new.

*6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*

Probably John did not expect to hear that sweet gospel message just then. The Lord Jesus Christ was speaking of lofty themes, of worlds newly made, and yet in the very middle of it all he puts this gracious promise. Let this be a pattern to all of you who are preachers or teachers, no matter what your subject may be, a gospel promise or invitation is always in place and in season. You may put it among the most golden sentences like a precious stone in a setting of pure gold, and it will never be out of order come when it may. Men hate God without the slightest reason for doing so, and God loves men without the slightest reason; there was every reason why men should love God, and not hate him; yet they have hated him without a cause, and there is every reason why God should hate man and not love him, yet he loves him so much that he gave his only-begotten Son to die, that whosoever believeth in him may live for ever.

*7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

What a wonderful word is that! “He shall be my son,” — not my servant, but “my son.” God give us the faith to rise to this more than royal dignity! “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”

*8. But the fearful, —*

No, that is not the right word, it is the cowardly, for there are many who are full of fear who are nevertheless most sincere and right in God’s sight:

“But the cowardly,” —

**8.** *And unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, —*

And the apostle John tells us that “whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, —

**8.** *And whoremongers,*

Unchaste and unclean men and women, —

**8.** *And sorcerers, —*

Persons who profess to have communications with the dead necromancers, spiritualists, and all people of that sort, —

**8.** *And idolaters, —*

That is, all who love anyone or anything better than God, —

**8.** *And all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

That is the death that never dies, the death which is far more to be dreaded than the death of the body.

**9.** *And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.*

John had already caught a glimpse of “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven;” and now this angelic messenger bids him come nearer, and look more closely into this mysterious and glorious city “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

**10-13.** *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.*

God’s Church glorified lieth open to all quarters of the infinitude of space, it is no prison-house of souls that dare not go beyond its borders, but a many-gated city, so that the blessed spirits there can fly whithersoever they will.

**14.** *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

Not Peter only, but the whole of the twelve apostles shall have their names in the foundations of that holy city.

**15. 16.** *And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.*

It seems at first to be astounding that the height of a city should be equal to the length and the breadth of it; but if you have traveled in Italy, you must have seen many a city, perched upon a hill, which seemed to be even higher than it was broad or long, if you included the wall of the city, and the houses one above another right up to the loftiest minaret or tower. Yes, like a priceless square casket made all of costly jewels is this wondrous city, equally glorious whichever way you look at it: "The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."

**17, 18.** *And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.*

Such gold as never was, nor is, nor ever shall be on this earth until that time when God shall have purified it. Our gold is dull, opaque; light is blocked out by it. How many might see if it were not for the gold which blinds them, and hides the truth from them!

**19, 20.** *And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald, the fifth, sardonyx, the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite, the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.*

You know that the stones of which this holy city is built are living stones. You and I, if we are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be there, living stones prepared by living grace to have a name and a place in this living city. But what changes will have to be wrought in us before we are fit to be put among these precious jewels! We are like poor blocks of common-looking stone, but we

do not know what we shall be like when we have been cut and polished on the great Lapidary's wheel. You may take a precious stone to a jeweler, and ask him what its value is, but he will say, "I cannot tell what it is worth until it has been cut and polished." That is how the Lord will prove the value of his living stones. If he will but work upon us by his grace, we cannot tell what he will make of us before he places us in the position he has appointed for us in the glorious city that rests upon these twelve precious foundations.

**21.** *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*

John had already said that "the city was pure gold like unto clear glass;" and now he says that "the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." We do not always get such a combination as this here below, gold, precious and pure, yet unstained with blood, and undimmed with the oppression of the poor, — diaphanous gold, "as it were transparent glass."

**22, 23.** *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

Yes, and the glorified Church herself, because of this light, sheds such a bright light on all within her that all the saints rejoice in her light.

**24, 25.** *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.*

Shut gates signify war; open gates mean peace. There shall be no more fear of war, no Gog and Magog to gather together to battle, no Armageddon to be dreaded by the glorified Church of Christ, which shall be in perfect peace for ever.

**26, 27.** *And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.*

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

## REVELATION 21:9-27

**9-22.** *And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone,, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*

The less there is of true religion, the more there usually is of outward ritualism. When true religion shall fill every heart, and God shall be the supreme joy of his people, they will need no temple.

**23.** *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

Outward means are abolished when their mission is accomplished.

**24.** *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.*

The Church shall be the metropolis of the world; it shall be honoured and esteemed among the nations of mankind. When men are godly, then will they reverence the abode of God, namely, the living Church, built up of living stones, upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ.

**25.** *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.*

There will be no need to shut out enemies at night, for the day shall last right on. The Church's most intimate intercourse with God, her constant commerce with the skies, will have begun then.

**26, 27.** *And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Into this holy city, the graceless, the Christless, the faithless shall never come. Here, we have a mixture of light and darkness; but, in those better days, it shall be all light, and the darkness shall have fled far away for ever.

## **REVELATION 21:10-27**

Here we shall see a picture of what the Church of God is to be in the latter days; but inasmuch as this vision came out of heaven, it gives us an idea of what is in heaven already. Crowded as it is with almost impossible beauties, this description is given to us to let us think, and by faith conceive, of the glories of the future state.

**10, 11.** *And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. Having the glory of God: and*

*her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;*

But what the glory of God may be, what mortal mind can imagine. All the imagery which the Apostle uses must fall far short of that simple expression, "Having the glory of God." That glory is to be upon the Church, and upon every individual member of it. The glory of every believer shall be nothing less than the glory of God.

**12, 13.** *And had a wall great and high. and had twelve gates, and at the gate twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.*

From every quarter of the world God's chosen shall come and find a gate straight before them, an entrance into heaven. Die at the Equator, or die at the Pole, there is an immediate entrance into the rest of God from any place where we may die. Blessed be the name of God for this.

**14-16.** *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.*

This is an idea scarcely to be grasped, to see a city which is as high as it is broad. Such cities cannot exist on earth. They are meant for that glorious future state. They will exist under the new heavens and in the new earth, for which we look at the coming of our Lord.

**17, 18.** *And be measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was of pure gold. like unto clear glass.*

All these joys are without sediment of sin. Gold on earth is a dull thing. You cannot look into it. But the joys of heaven, if compared to gold, must be diaphanous. "Pure gold like unto clear glass" — all the earth taken out of it, from all its earthly grossness quit. The joy of heaven is divine.

**19, 20.** *And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.*

See how lovingly our Apostle counts the foundations. He might have run them all into one, and said, “The foundations were of these twelve stones,” but it must be the first foundation, the second, the third, the fourth. He dwells on every one. The joys of heaven will bear dwelling upon; they will bear reflection. Here our joys, when they are over, leave but a handful of thorns — but a handful of ashes like thorns that crackle and blaze under the pot, and leave little behind them. But the joys eternal and spiritual will bear for us to go into detail, and each one shall be most precious.

**21.** *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls.*

Whoever heard of such pearls? In what ocean but in the depth of God could such pearls be found? The twelve gates were twelve pearls.

**21.** *Every several gate was one of pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*

Streets are used for fellowship. There men meet each other, and the fellowship of heaven will be golden, bright, clear, perfect. Here, when we meet with one another, we soon display and discover our mutual faults, but there they shall delight each other with their common beauty, all the beauties being borrowed from the Lamb, who is the glory of the place.

**22.** *And I saw no temple therein.*

For it was all one temple.

**22, 23.** *For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

Let us be going that way soon, brothers. Ah! my brothers, may we all meet there. What must it be to be there!

**24-27.** *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour*

*into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.*

And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations unto it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 8:26-30; REVELATION 21:10-27; 22:1-5.

## **REVELATION 21:22-27**

**22.** *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*

It has a temple, that better state, that land of the Well-beloved, but not a material temple that John could see, yet he knew that it had a temple “for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” Where they are is the holy place where all the tribes of the spiritual Israel shall be gathered at the last to go no more out for ever. “The Lord God Almighty “and the Lamb “ have a glory far greater than Solomon's temple ever had and far greater even than that later temple which excelled even his in glory.

**23.** *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

We have need of both the sun and the moon while we are in this world if it were not for the great central luminary, the solar system would cease to be, and this earth and the moon and all their sister planets would die out in darkness. But when the sun has been turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, it shall still be said of this holy city, the new Jerusalem, that the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. See how blessedly God and the Lamb are linked together, for Father and Son are truly one. It is pleasant also to reflect that he who is “the light of the world” is also the light of the world that is yet to be revealed: “the Lamb is the light thereof.”

**24.** *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.*

This is the Church of the latter days; the beginning of the heavenly state, a true type of what the eternal glory of the saints will be. The Church will no longer, like her Lord, be despised and rejected of men; but the highest and greatest among men shall count it an honour and glory to be permitted to share its blessings and triumphs.

**25.** *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.*

Well did Dr. Doddridge sing,-

“No rude alarms of raging foes  
No cares to break the long repose  
No midnight shade, no clouded sun  
But saved, high, eternal noon.”

The saints will then be able to bear that eternal noontide for the sun shall not smite them by day; and they will have no need of the night which is now so necessary for resting our wearied bodies and minds, so “there shall be no night there.” There will also be no night of sorrow, no night of sin, no night of death in that blest land of light.

**26, 27.** *And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life. That holy city would itself be defiled if anything that defileth could enter into it. Only they who are written in the Lamb’s book of life shall be found in the glorious city of which he is the light.*

“Those holy gates for ever bar pollution, sin, and shame. None can obtain admittance there But followers of the Lamb.”

This exposition consisted of readings from REVELATION 21:22-27; AND 22

## **REVELATION 22**

**1.** *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

Here again we have God and the Lamb uniting in giving that “water of life” which flows down to us by God’s grace through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

*2. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

The fruit of this “tree of life “ is for all those who have partaken of the water of life; and the tree provides medicine as well as food: “ the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

*3-5. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their forehead. And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the lord God giveth them light and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

This is the climax of the saints’ blessedness: “ they shall reign for ever and ever.” Thus are they to be like their Lord, for “ he shall reign for ever and ever.” As they shared his reproach, they shall also share his glory.

*6-9. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the saying of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these thing, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.*

It was a pardonable mistake that John made, but it was a mistake, for even the highest angel in heaven must not be accorded the worship that is due to God alone.

*10, 11. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, Let him be holy still.*

If your character is not what it ought to be, you must not delay your appeal to him who alone can change it, “for the time is at hand” when your character and state will be fixed for ever. As when there is a sharp frost the water in the brooks is soon congealed, so

are there influences at work which are consolidating character; beware lest Christ's coming or the summons through death should find you unprepared, and so cause you to remain for ever just as you now are.

**12.** *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

There will be no change possible when Christ comes as the Judge of all mankind. If you are filthy then, you will be filthy for ever; if you are holy then, you will be holy for ever. The delusion of universal salvation must be banished from the minds of all who believe the Word of God.

**13-17.** *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*

For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. This "Come" seems to sound both ways,-from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven. Christ saith to us, "Come," and we cry to him, "Come." Oh, that sinners would be obedient to the divine "Come," and "take the water of life freely;" for then would the second coming of Christ be full of joy to them, and not a matter of dread.

**18, 19.** *For I testify unto every man that heard the word of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plague that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in the book.*

God's revelation is perfect; to add to it or to take from it would equally mar it, and the terrible threatenings here given concerning those who do either the one or the other ought to prevent so great a

crime against high heaven. Yet, alas! many have dared and still dare to commit it.

**20.** *He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.*

All those centuries ago, Jesus said, "I am coming quickly;" how much nearer his coming must be, and how earnestly we too should cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

**21.** *The grace of our lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

The Old Testament ended with a curse, the New Testament ends with benediction. Oh, that we might all have a share of it.

This exposition consisted of readings from REVELATION 21:22-27; AND 22

## **REVELATION 22**

**1.** *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the lamb.*

There is no other "water of life" except that which springs from a Sovereign God and a substitutionary sacrifice: "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." This sets forth the blessings of salvation that come to us through the Sovereign grace of God by the precious blood of Jesus.

**2.** *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruit, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

When Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, he was cast out of Eden, lest he should also eat of the tree of life; but our new "tree of life" yields us both medicine and food. Blessed are they that eat of it; they shall find a divine variety of mercies: "twelve manner of fruits." They shall find a constant succession of blessings: "and yielded her fruit every month." And there shall be an ever-present power of healing: "the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

**3.** *And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:*

Happy servants, to be permitted so to do! Here, dear friends, we are hindered in our service, but I think that it will be heaven enough

for some of us to be permitted to serve the Lord for ever in glory: “His servants shall serve him.”

**4. *And they shall see his face;***

Oh, to keep up communion with the Lord while you are at work for him, to serve him and to see his face! This is a double joy; this is to be like Martha and Mary in one person: “his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face.”

**4. *And his name shall be in their foreheads.***

They will acknowledge him, and he will acknowledge them. They are glad to wear his name in their foreheads; but who wrote it there? He himself engraved it, as the seal and token that they were his. Happy, happy people, thus to be owned of God as his peculiar people while they own him as their only Lord!

**5. *And there shall be no night there;***

Here, there are nights of ignorance, of sorrow, of sin, and of fear; but “there shall be no night there.”

**6. *And they need no candles, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light:***

He puts aside the use of means. While we are here, we need candles and suns. It seems curious, does it not, to put candles and suns in the same sentence? “They need no candle, neither light of the sun.” But, after all, compared with God, candles and suns are very much the same thing. Great lights and little lights are all limited, all less than nothing, in comparison with the boundless, infinite God, who is light, and the source of all light that exists in heaven above, or on the earth beneath.

**6. *And they shall reign for ever and ever.***

It must be a wonderful city in which every inhabitant is a king; and not a dethroned king either, for “they shall reign.” Every redeemed one in heaven has also an everlasting kingdom; “They shall reign for ever and ever.” I hope our friends who are always cutting down the meaning of the word “everlasting” will be good enough at least to let us have an everlasting heaven; whether they do so, or not, we believe that the saints shall reign “for ever and ever.”

**6, 7. *And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his***

*servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly:*

Or, "I am coming quickly."

**7.** *Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*

Our Lord is on the road; he may arrive tonight, while we are sitting here. Happy would be our communion service if, for the last time, we should be doing as he commanded us in expectation of his coming, and that he should come even while we were commemorating his death!

**8, 9.** *And John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophet, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.*

John made a mistake; he mistook the messenger for the Master, and I am not surprised that he did so, for the heavenly beings are like their Lord when they see him as he is. John was quickly set right, and his error was soon corrected. He was bidden to pay no kind of homage to one who however bright and holy, was only his fellow servant. No worship of angels, no worship of angelic men, must be tolerated among us. "Worship God," is the command to us as it was to John.

**10.** *And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.*

There was no need to seal the prophecy, as though it only related to those who would live in distant ages: "The time is at hand."

**11.** *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

This is what will be said when Christ comes to judgment, when we get into that future state. Today the voice of Jesus says, "Repent, Repent Repent;" but once cross the narrow stream of death, and pass out of the dispensation of mercy, and then character is fixed, and fixed for ever.

**12.** *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according to his work shall be.*

What reward will some of you get? Christ will “give every man according as his work shall be.”

**13-15.** *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs,*

Men of a quarrelsome and filthy spirit.

**15.** *And sorcerers,*

Such as pretend to have dealings with spirits, and who intermeddle with the mysterious things of the unknown world.

**15.** *And whoremongers,*

All such as indulge their evil passions.

**15.** *And murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

Whether it be a lie about things on earth or things in heaven, a falsehood spoken or a false doctrine taught.

**16-18.** *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the rock and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:*

The Book is finished. Not another line of inspiration may any man dare to put to it, on peril that God shall add to him every plague of which the Book speaks.

**19.** *And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

The Book is perfect. You cannot take a line from it without spoiling it if you were to cut from it a solitary text, it would be misused, and the Book should be marred. You would do this at your peril, for God threatens to take away out of the Book of life the name of anyone who takes anything from “the words of the book of this prophecy.”

20. *He which testifieth these thing saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

Thus we sang just now, —

“Come, thou, the soul of all our joys Thou, the desire of nations,  
come!”

21. *The grace of our lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

The whole inspired volume thus closes with a benediction: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

## REVELATION 22

1. *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

Rivers partake of the character of the source from which they come that which proceeds “out of the throne of God and of the Lamb “may well be “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal.” What but good and perfect gifts can come down from the throne of God? What but pure streams of mercy can flow from the throne of the Lamb?

2. *In the midst of the street of it,-*

For heaven is a place of sacred intercourse and hallowed communion: “in the midst of the street of it,”-

2. *And on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits,*

Every variety of joy and blessedness,

2. *And yielded her fruit every month:*

For the felicities of heaven are ever fresh and ever new, we shall never be satiated or wearied with that heavenly fruit.

2. *And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

Everything in heaven is the very best of the best. The leaves of the trees in earthly gardens are blown about by the blast, and we take but little note of them; but the leaves of the tree of life are “for the healing of the nations.” O happy place, where even the leaves on the tree have such virtue in them!

3. *And there shall be no more curse:*

No more thorns or thistles, no more pangs of child-bearing, no more sickness, or sorrow, or death.

**3.** *But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him:*

They shall have nothing else to do, and it shall be their supreme delight to serve him perfectly and unceasingly.

**4.** *And thy shall see his face;*

Not through a glass darkly, but face to face shall they behold their God. Surely that will be the very heaven of heaven.

**4.** *And his name shall be in their foreheads.*

Aaron was to wear upon his forehead a plate of pure gold, with HOLINESS TO THE LORD engraved upon it, that the children of Israel might be accepted before the Lord, but the saints in glory are to have the name of their God “in their foreheads.” In the very forefront of their glorified personalities there shall be the marks to betoken that they are the children of God.

**5.** *And there shall be no night there;*

The saints in glory will have no need of sleep, so “there shall be no night there,” but one perpetual day of holy, unwearying service. There shall be no night of ignorance, of sorrow, of sin, of death; there shall be no powers of darkness there, and no darkness in which they might work their evil deeds.

**5.** *And they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light:*

Directly and distinctly, without using any means, by his own immediate presence, “the Lord God giveth them light.”-

**5.** *And they shall reign for ever and ever.*

Earthly kings die, or their empires on earth are taken from them; but as for us whom God hath chosen by his grace, our kingdom is like that of our Lord and Saviour, it is an everlasting kingdom.

“They shall reign for ever and ever.” I wonder that some wise man does not try to prove that this means that the saints shall reign only for a short time they have whittled “everlasting punishment” down to next to nothing, why do they not try to reduce the duration of heaven, bliss in the same way. The same words are used concerning the one as concerning the other, so we shall always hold

to the eternity both of the one and the other, the bliss and the woe are equally “for ever and ever.”

**6, 7.** *And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*

You have the witness of God, you have the witness of the angel of God, you have the witness of Christ you have the witness of John, and all of them agree that “these sayings are faithful and true,” and that they relate to facts that shall in due course be established.

**8.** *And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.*

And, according to the Church of Rome, he was quite right; but, according to the Word of God, he was quite wrong.

**9.** *Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.*

Worship none but God; take care not to break the first two of the ten commandments either by worshipping another God or by worshipping the true God under any form of similitude whatsoever.

**10.** *And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.*

“There is no need to roll it up, and set a seal to it; as it is so soon to be fulfilled, leave it open.”

**11.** *He that is unjust, let him be just still: and he which is filthy! let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

The Lord’s messenger speaks as if “the time” were so nearly come that there was no opportunity left for any charge to be made, and this is what will happen, sooner or later, to all men. When they die, their characters will be fixed for ever. The wax will cool, and the impress that it bears will be retained eternally.

**12, 13.** *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*

These must be the words of the Lord Jesus Christ himself; no mere messenger, however high his rank, would have dared to say, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

**14, 16.** *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

We thank God that they are shut out of heaven, for, albeit that we wish all men could be there, yet we would wish none to be there whose characters are of such a kind as this, unless they were washed and cleansed. Heaven would be no heaven if such men could be admitted there. They shall not be; they must, by infallible justice, be excluded from the realms of bliss.

**16.** *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*

So glory is dawning, for Christ the bright and morning star, has risen,

**17.** *And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth one, come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

Here we have the last invitations in the Word of God; may all who have not yet accepted them do so now, lest they should never again be uttered in their hearing.

**18-21.** *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

So the blessed Book closes appropriately with grace, for 'tis grace that-

“All the work shall crown Through everlasting days;  
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise.”

This exposition consisted of readings from GENESIS 2:1-17; AND REVELATION 22.

### **REVELATION 22:1-5**

**1, 2.** *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

Abounding joy, varied joy, ever changing, yet ever perfect; a tree which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yet fruits every month. Oh! when shall we get away to those golden orchards; when shall we sit under those vines, and press the clusters with our lips?

**3.** *And there shall be no more curse:*

Of labour, of sin, of sorrow, of death.

**3.** *But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it:*

So that we shall all be in the throne-room, all beholding the King in his beauty, and ourselves made his courtiers.

**3.** *And his servants shall serve him:*

That is heaven to me, for here we sometimes are unable to serve him as we would. We are distracted, worried, carried away from holy service by multitudes of cares, but there his servants shall serve him.

**4.** *And they shall see his face:*

What a happy blending — service and communion — the hands busy, but the eyes ravished with the wondrous sight of the face of God! Thou shalt see his face. If any of us could see the face of God on earth, no doubt we should die. The vision would be too bright for us. When one heard this.

one of the greatest saints, he said, “Then let me see it and die,” and I do not wonder that he said so, for the sight of God, even should we die here, must still be perpetual, and it would make us live again. “They shall see his face.”

4. *And his name shall be in their foreheads,*

Their faces made like God's face, then — his name, his character, reflected on their brows — is not this worth having?

5. *And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and They themselves shall be kings. They shall reign for ever and ever.*

This exposition consisted of readings from ROMANS 8:26-30; REVELATION 21:10-27; 22:1-5.

### **REVELATION 22:1-7**

1. *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

Infinite sovereignty bestows grace; the river of grace flows from the throne of God. It is the King who saves his people; yet the atonement is ever connected with the sovereignty: "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

2. *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

God will enrich his Church by giving her a great variety of good things: "twelve manner of fruits." There shall also be a constancy and perpetuity about the supply of them, for this tree "yielded her fruit every month." And if there be ought of ill remaining anywhere in the world in those halcyon days, God shall supply a cure for it: "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of nations."

3. *And there shall be no more curse:*

The curse shall be taken from the soft on which it fell obliquely when God said to Adam, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." There shall be no curse upon man's body; there shall be nothing but blessing. Blessing shall swallow up the cursing, and God shall be manifest everywhere.

3. *But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shalt serve him:*

This is what we try to do now, but we shall more fully accomplish the blessed task in those brighter days which every revolution of the wheel of time is hastening on.

**4. *And they shall see his face;***

Oh, that is glorious service,—to serve the Lord and to see his face at the same time. Communion and service are ever best when they are blended. There can be no fellowship better than first which serves, and no service sweeter than that of those who continue to see the face of their Master while they are serving him,

**4. *And his name shall be in their foreheads.***

There will be no mistaking: them; they shall bear in their foreheads the glorious name of God, just as the high priest of old had the words, “Holiness unto the Lord” upon his brow.

**5. *And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun;—***

Even the sun is only worthy to be ranked with a candle in comparison with the light of God himself John puts the two things in one sentence: “they need no candle, neither light of the sun;”—

**5-7. *For the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever and he said unto me, These sayings are faithful the true: and the LORD God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold I come quickly-blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.***

Even so, come, Lord Jesus; come quickly! Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from JEREMIAH 5:1-6 and 10-31; and REVELATION 22:1-7.









